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YEARS BEST COMICS STORIES

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BEST OF DC--YEAR'S BEST COMICS STORIES--148 PAGES

31730



TOP TEN TALES OF 1981

YEAR'S BEST COMICS STORIES

**** Editor—Julius Schwartz ****

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A Warner Communications Company

BAT MAN

CREATED BY

BOB
KANE

GOTHAM CITY--
TWENTY YEARS AGO:

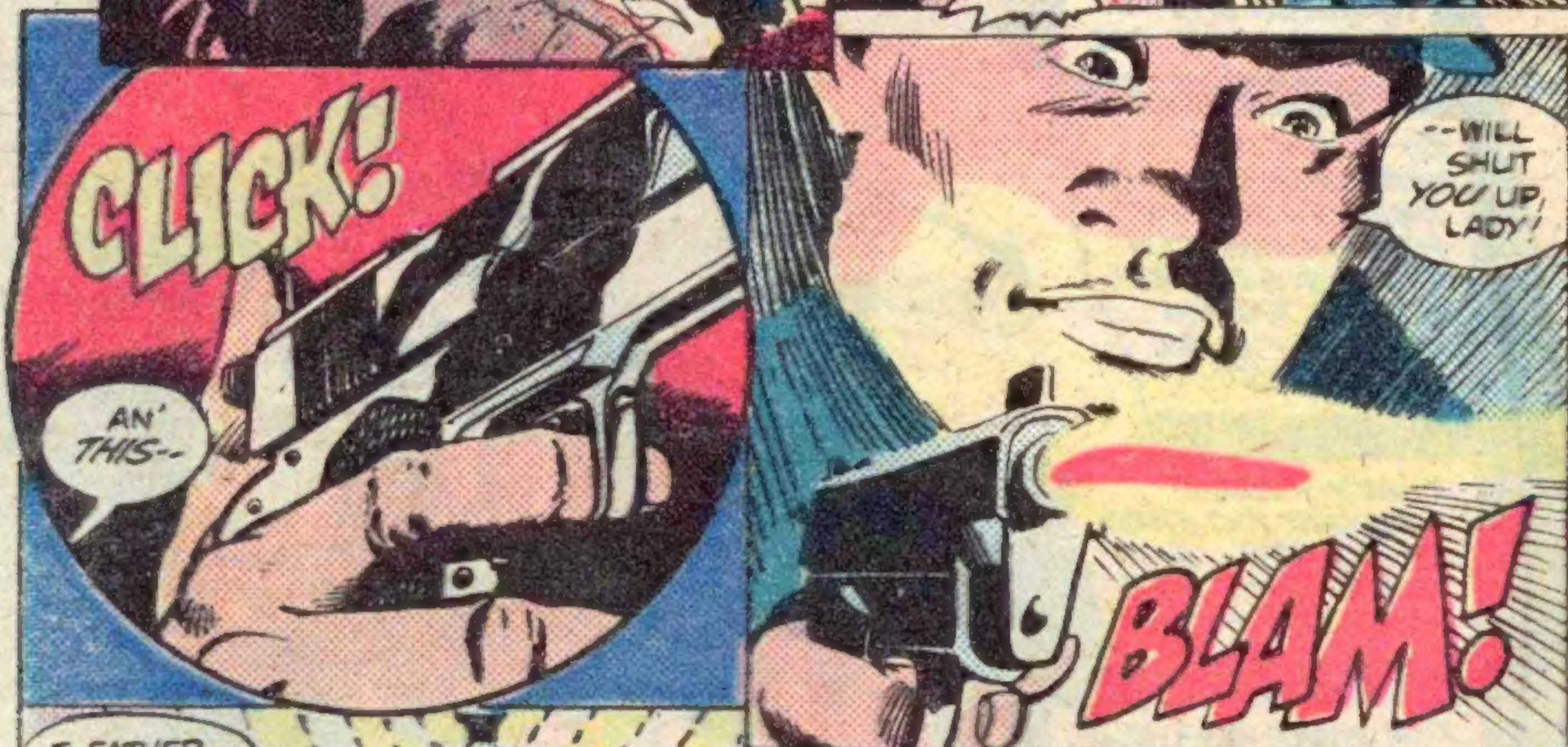
IN EVERY LIFE
WORTH REMEMBERING,
THERE IS A TURNING
POINT-- A MOMENT IN
TIME WHEN A DECISION
IS MADE, AND THE
COURSE OF A LIFE
IS CHANGED.

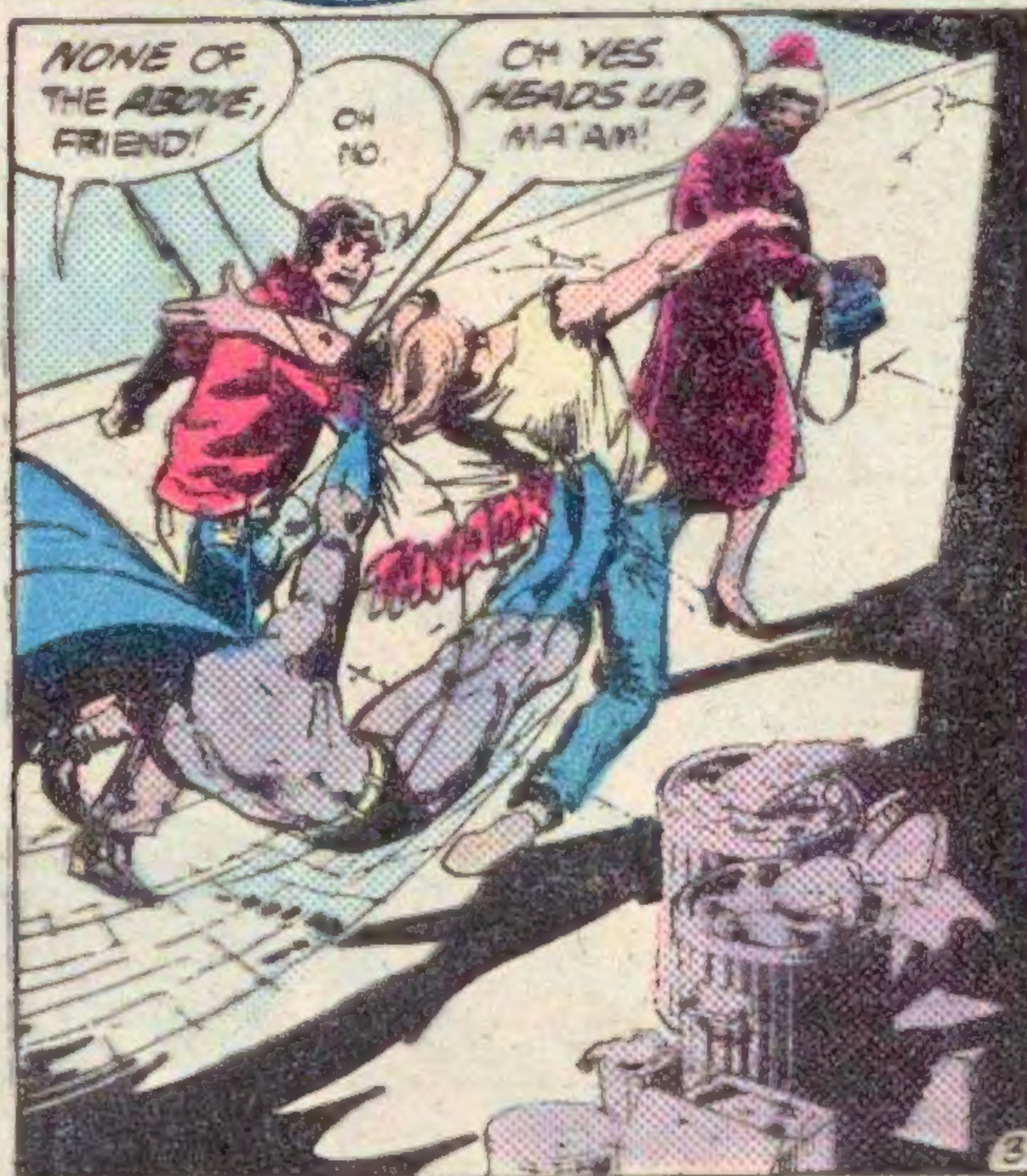
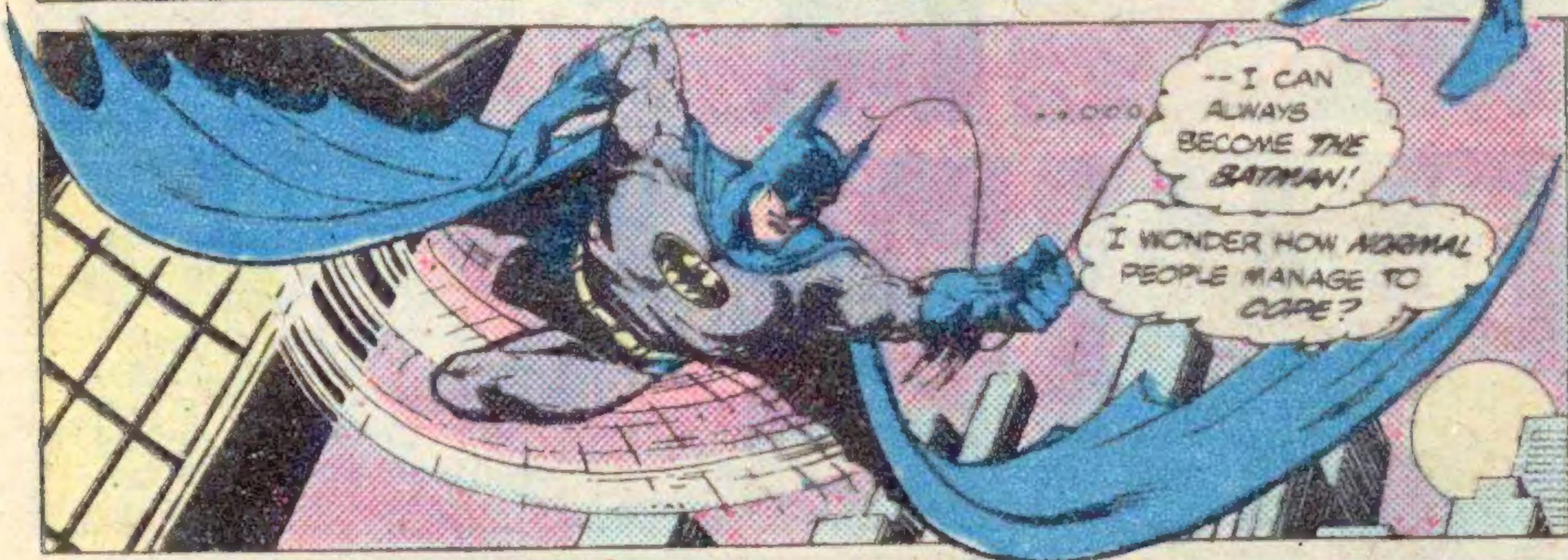
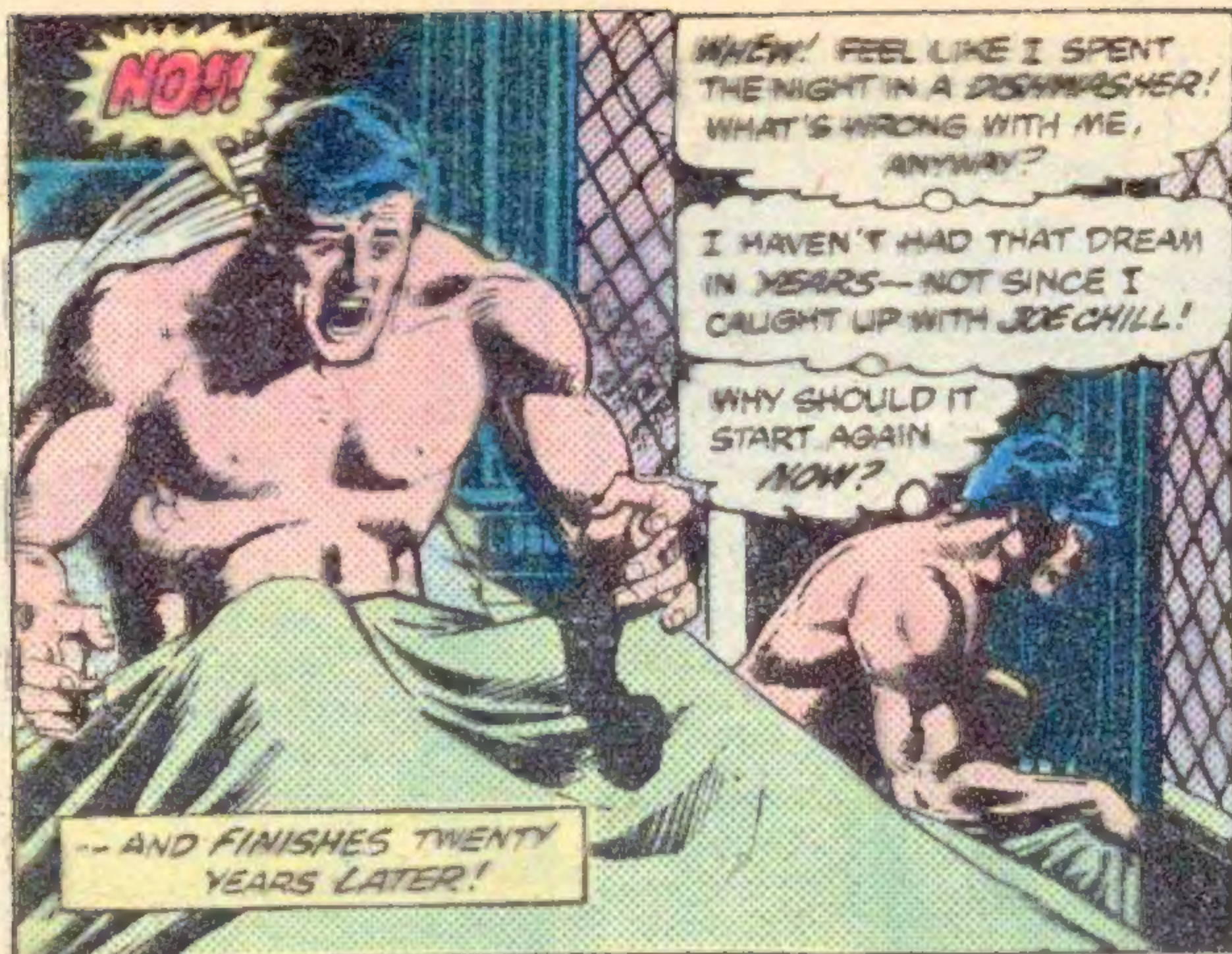
A WRONG TURN...
A SECOND TOO EARLY
OR TOO LATE... AND
THINGS MIGHT HAVE
BEEN DIFFERENT.

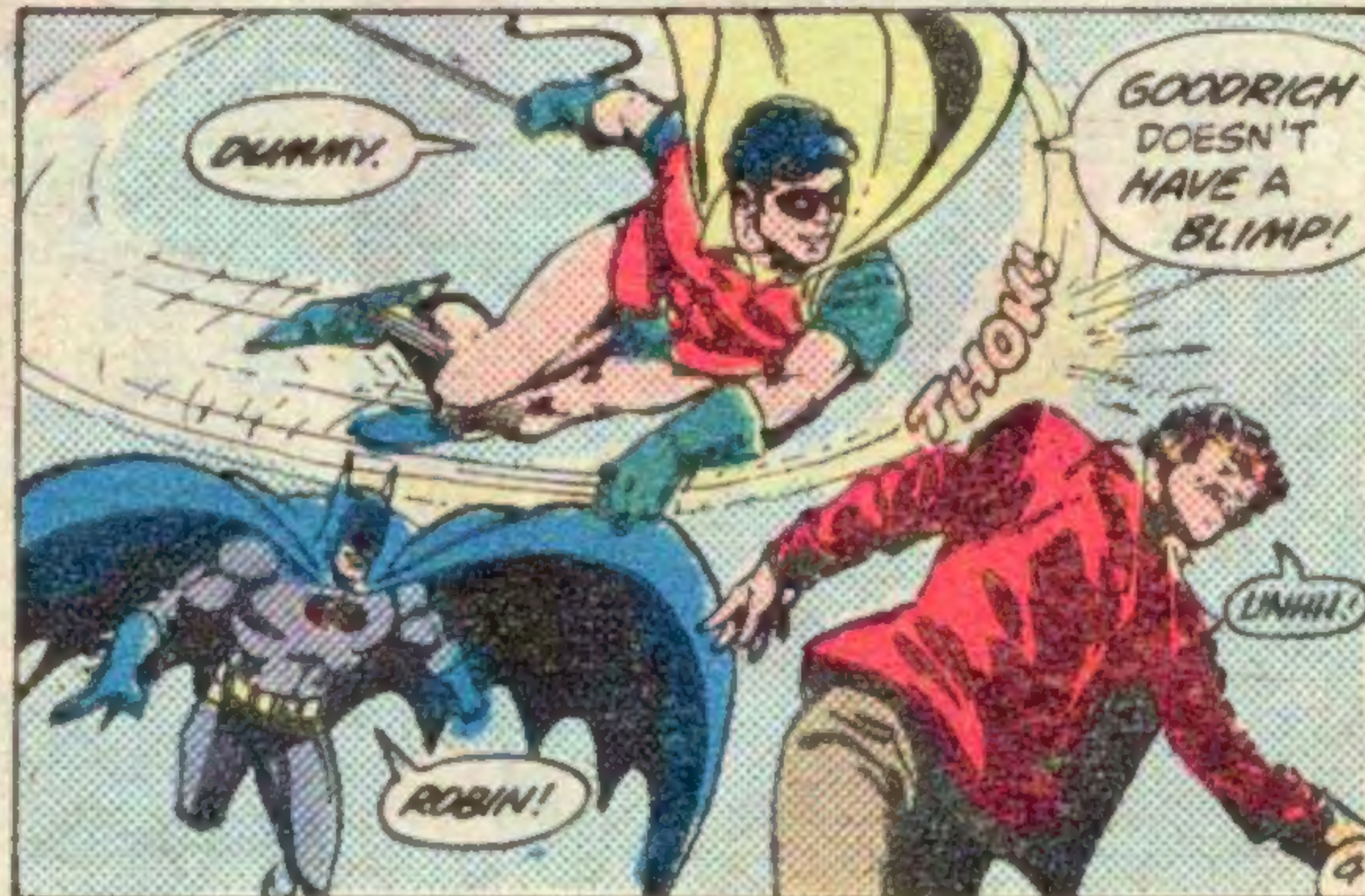
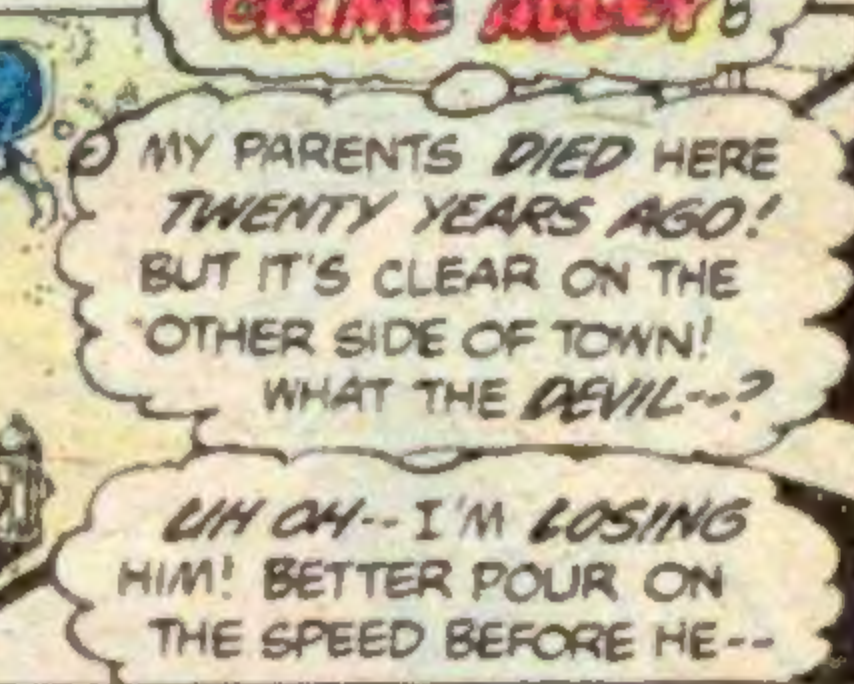
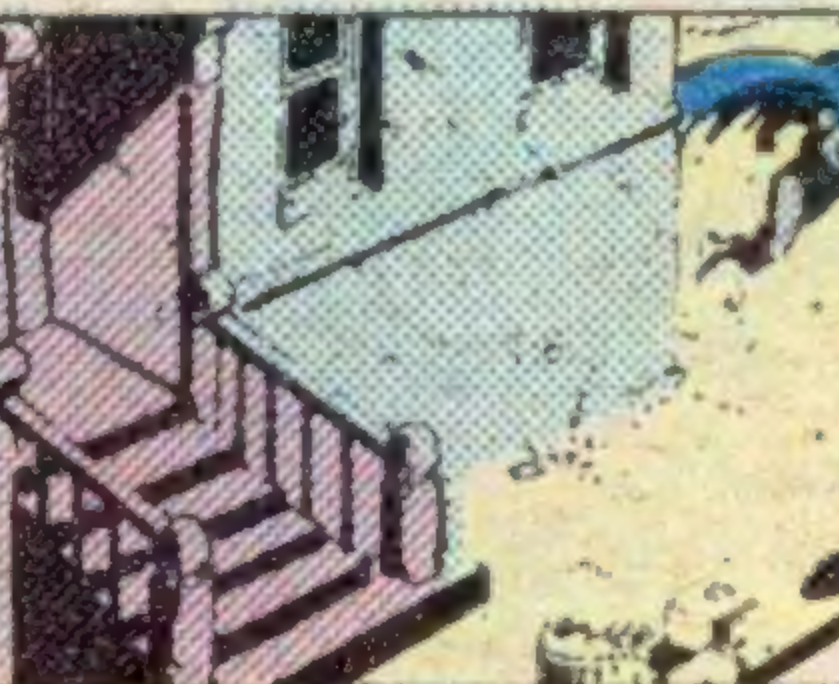
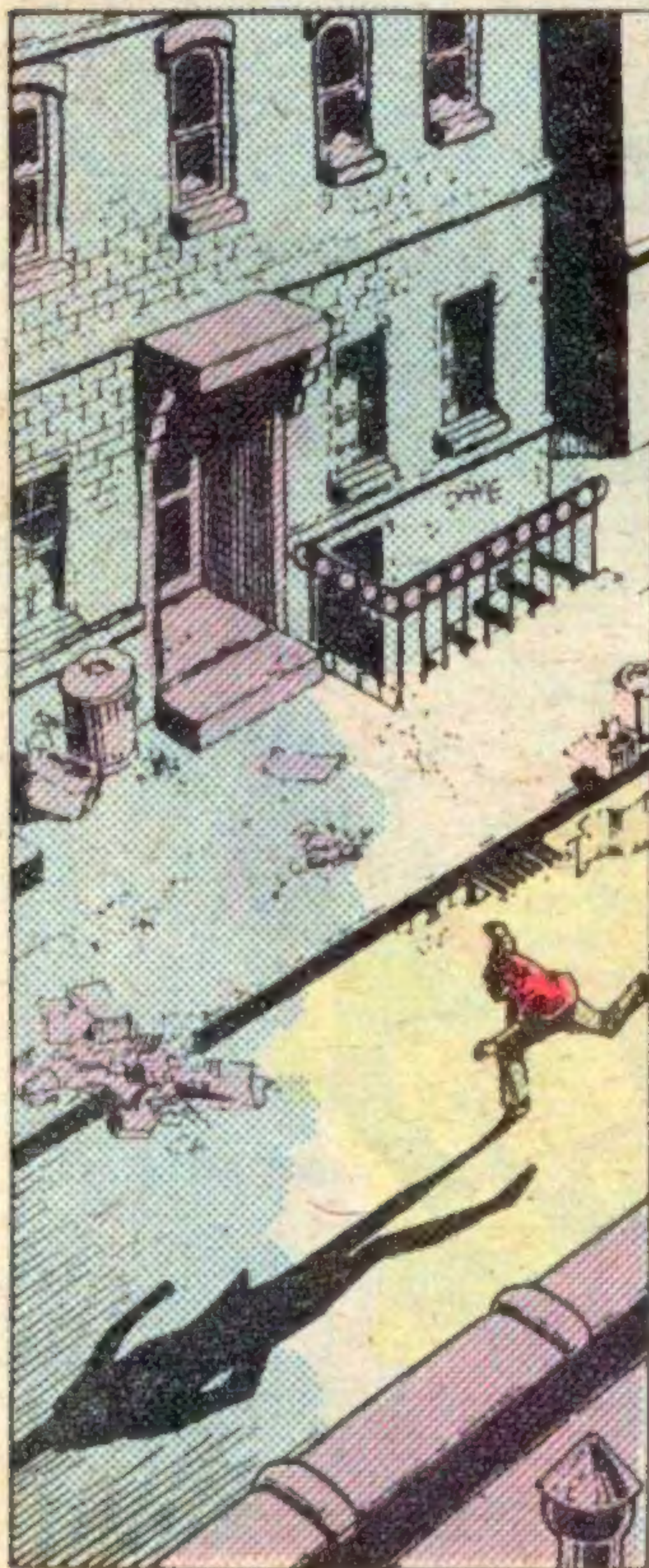
FOR EIGHT-YEAR-OLD
BRUCE WAYNE, THAT
TURNING POINT IS ONLY
MOMENTS AWAY. AND,
ONCE IT IS REACHED...
IT CANNOT BE TAKEN
BACK.

OR CAN IT?

TO KILL A LEGEND







DICK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I PUT YOU ON A PLANE TO EUROPE
THIS MORNING!

PLANE...?
EUROPE?

YES...OF
COURSE. WHAT
AM I DOING
HERE?!

YOU ARE
HERE...
BECAUSE
YOU MUST
BE HERE!

PHANTOM STRANGER?!

SO YOU PULLED THAT
TRICK WITH THE FOG! BUT
WHAT BRINGS YOU TO
GOTHAM? WHAT'S
WRONG?

UH, WE'VE NEVER MET
BEFORE, STRANGER, BUT
I TAKE IT YOU'RE HEAVILY
INTO CRYPTIC.

CARE TO
TRANSLATE
THAT?

OF COURSE. THERE ARE
WORLDS BEYOND WORLDS,
DICK GRAYSON...

...HUNDREDS OF EARTHS
LIKE YOUR OWN, EXISTING
IN AS MANY DIFFERENT
DIMENSIONS.

ON ONE SUCH EARTH,
BATMAN, FORTY YEARS
AGO, ANOTHER BRUCE
WAYNE SAW HIS PARENTS
MURDERED... AND
VOWED TO AVENGE
THEIR DEATHS.

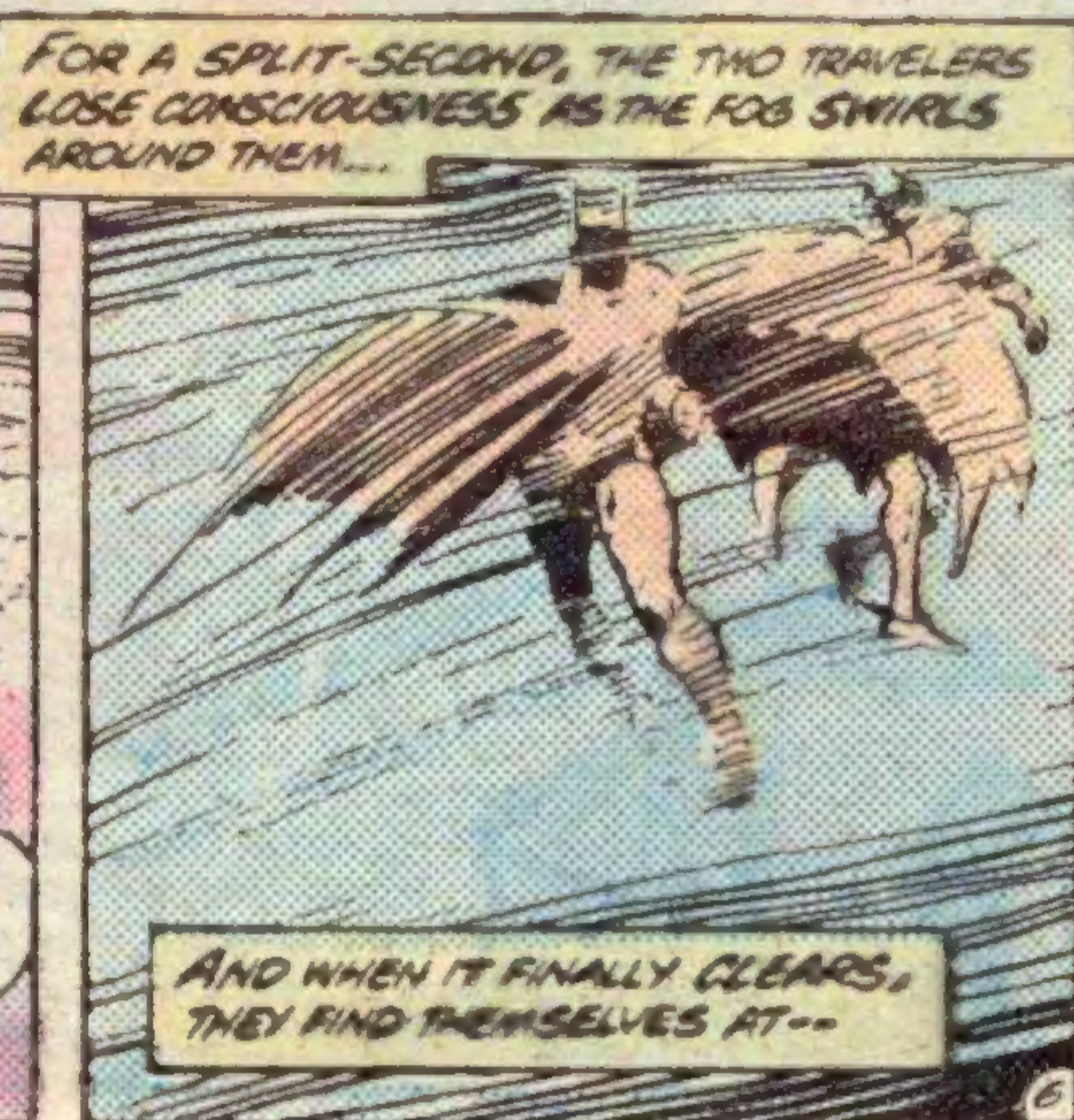
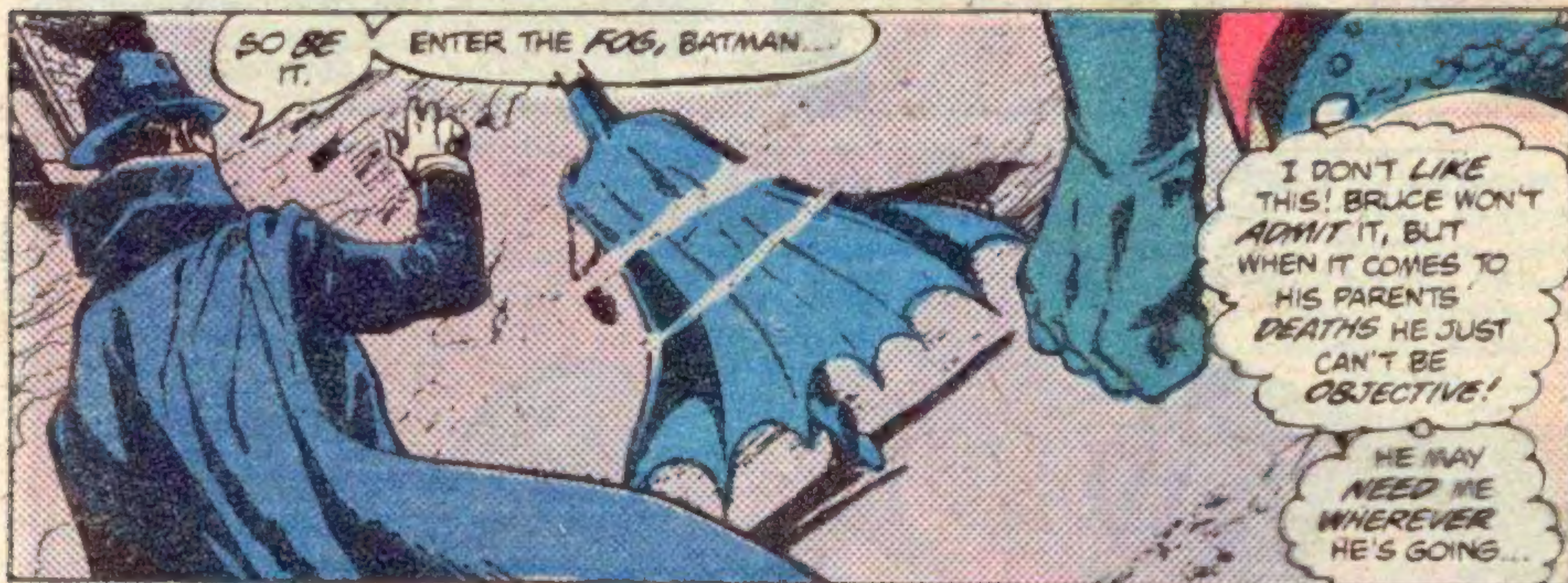
TWENTY YEARS LATER, ON THIS EARTH,
YOU WATCHED YOUR PARENTS DIE...
AND BECAME, LIKE YOUR PREDECESSOR,
THE BATMAN.

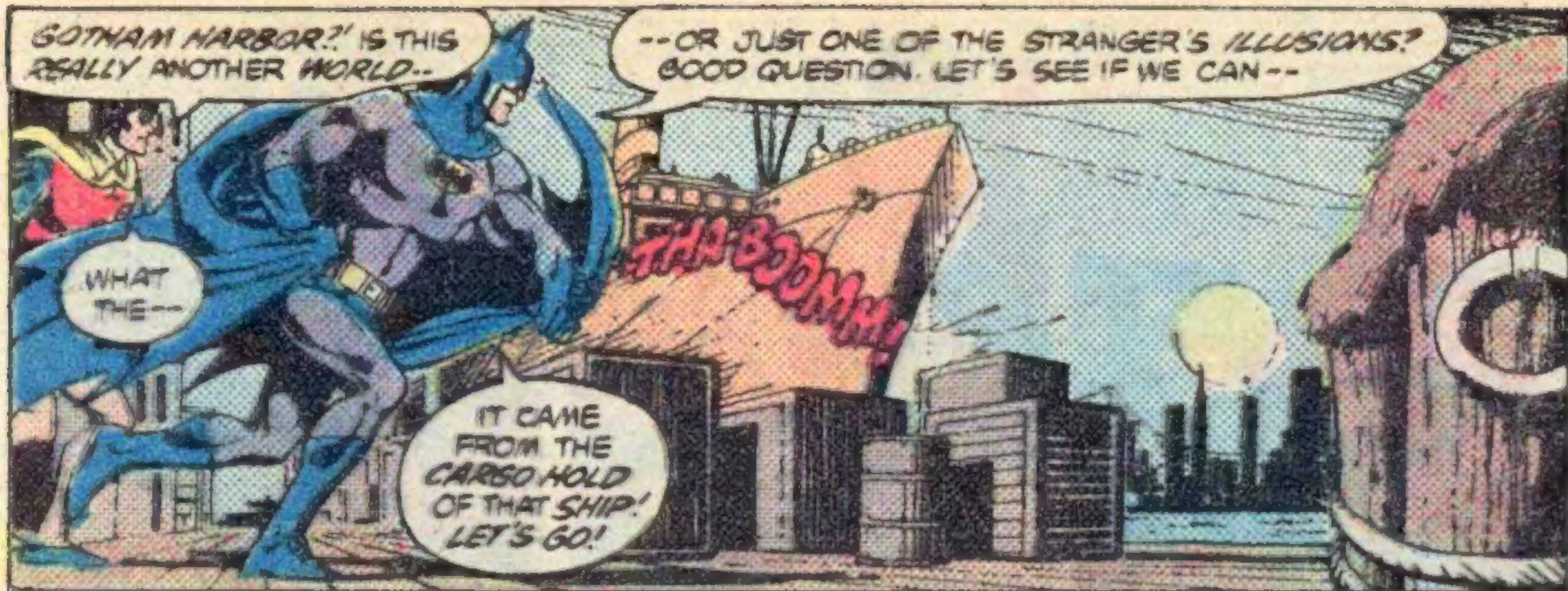
NOW-- ON STILL
ANOTHER EARTH--
THE CYCLE IS
ABOUT TO REPEAT
ITSELF.

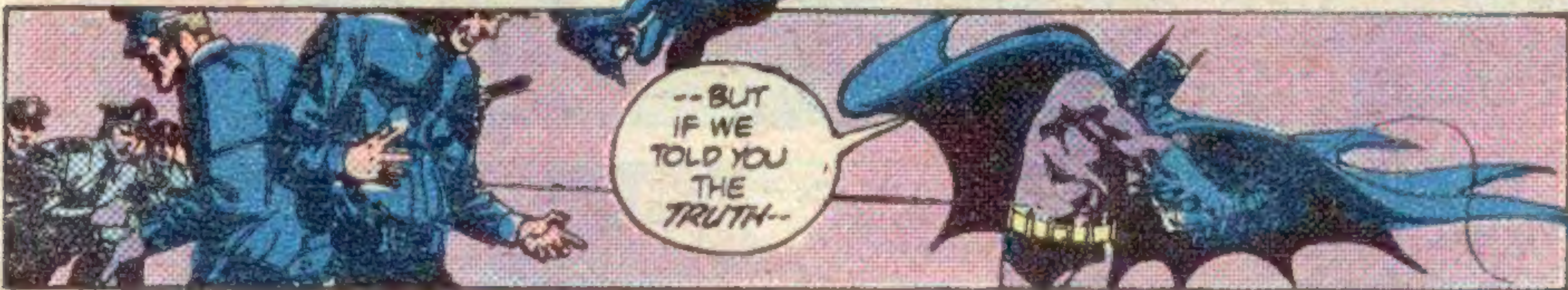
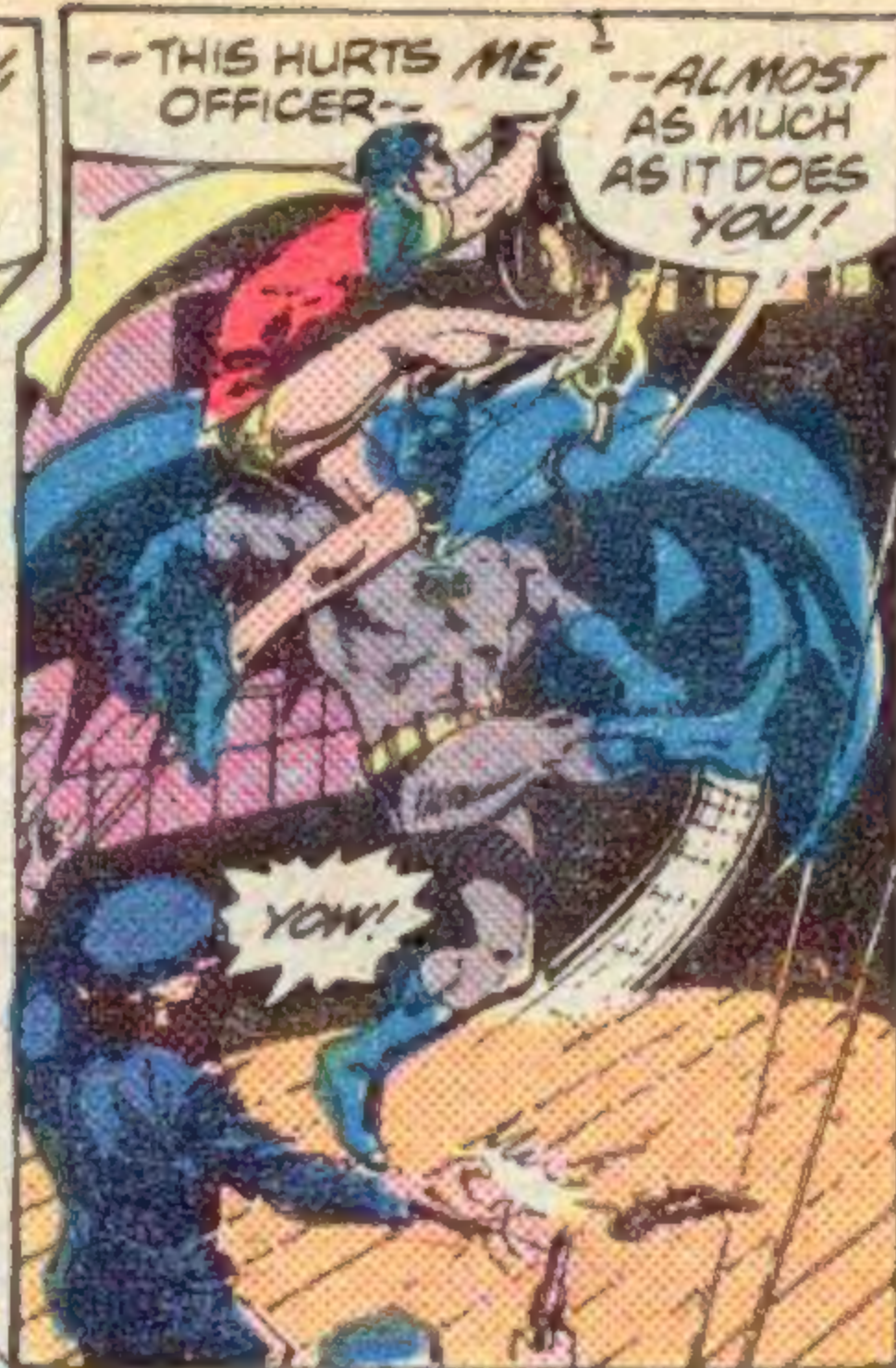
THOMAS AND MARTHA
WAYNE WILL DIE AGAIN--
UNLESS YOU
INTERVENE.

INTERVENE? YOU
MEAN-- TRAVEL
TO THIS OTHER
EARTH AND STOP
THE MURDER?

BUT-- WHY
ARE YOU
OFFERING
ME THIS?







MORNING IN GOTHAM-- AND TWO VISITORS WALK A FAMILIAR YET ALIEN CITY...

SO MANY SMALL DIFFERENCES! CRIME ALLEY IS STILL PARK ROW... BASIN STREET IS BASIN AVENUE...

HOW DO WE KNOW WHERE THE WAYNES LIVE ON THIS EARTH?

WE DON'T!

WHICH IS WHY WE USE THE SOCIAL REGISTER-- IN HERE!

I CAN'T HELP FEELING EXPOSED! WE ARE WANTED CRIMINALS NOW!

WE'RE ALSO CIPHERS-- WE DON'T EXIST IN THIS WORLD, SO HOW COULD ANYONE, EVEN THE POLICE, RECOGNIZE US?

DR. WAYNE! IS THAT YOU?

BARBARA KEAN, REMEMBER-- DETECTIVE GORDON'S FIANCEE? YOU ARE THOMAS WAYNE, AREN'T YOU?

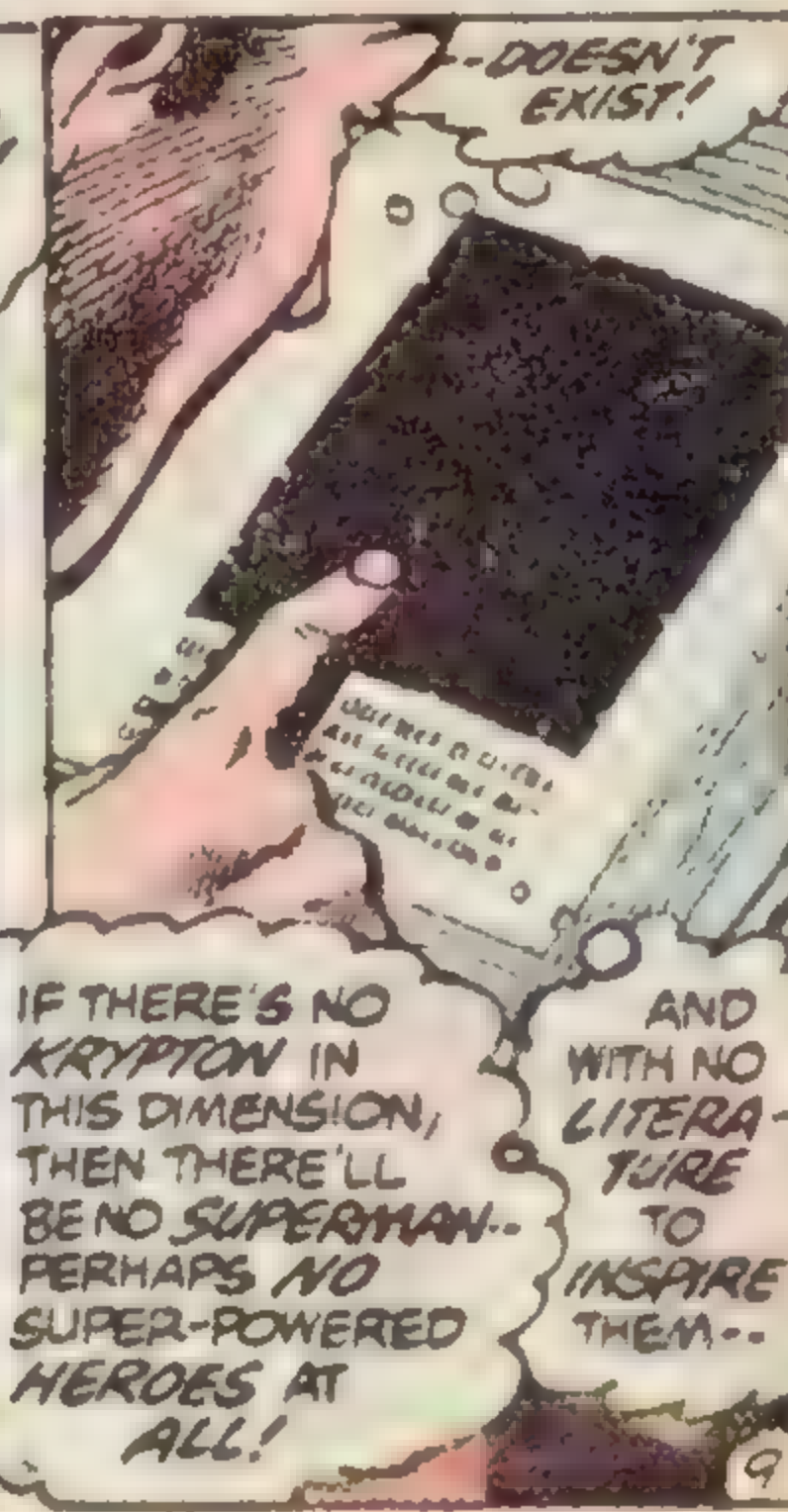
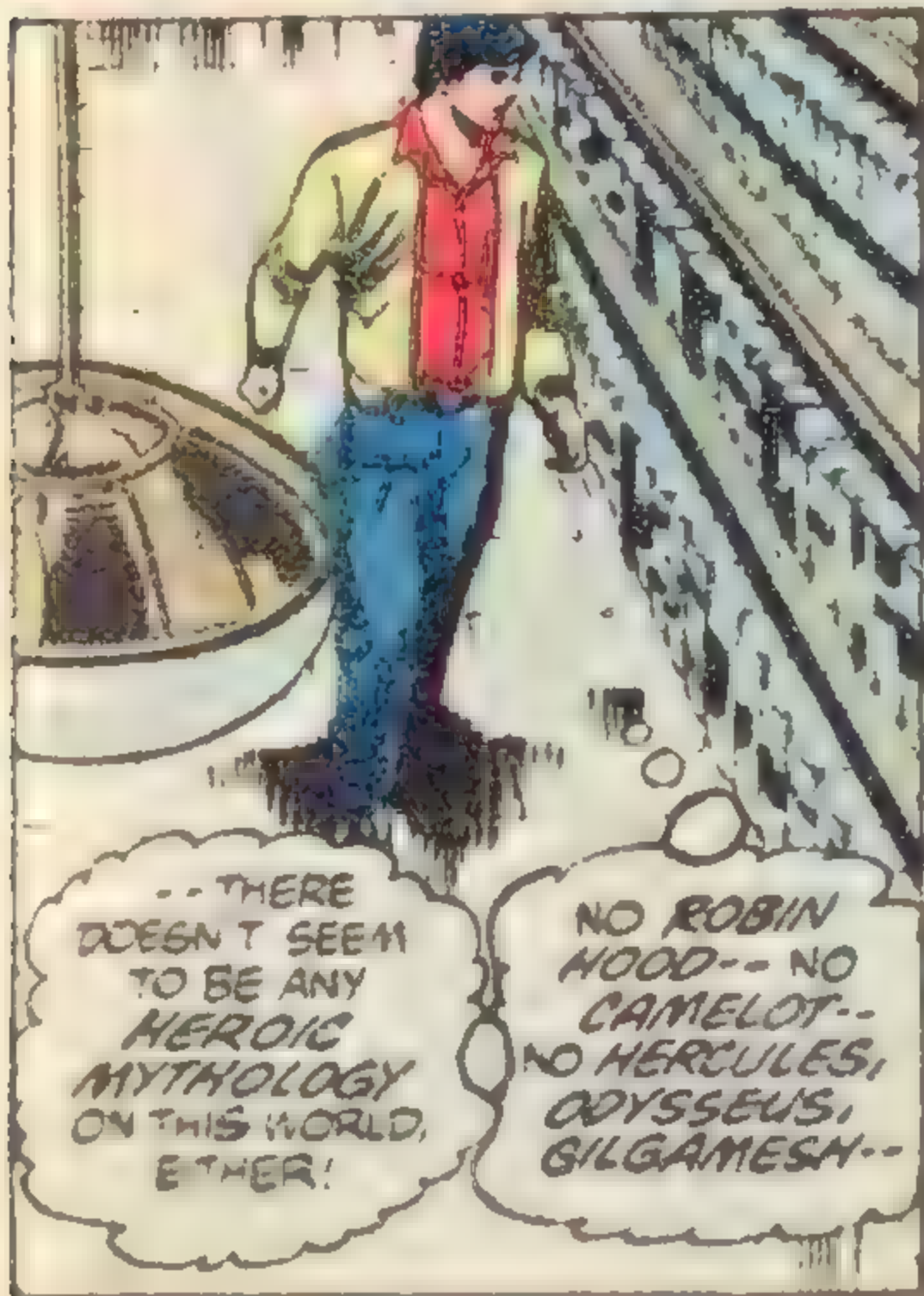
UH-- YES. OF COURSE. HOW ARE YOU, MISS KEAN?

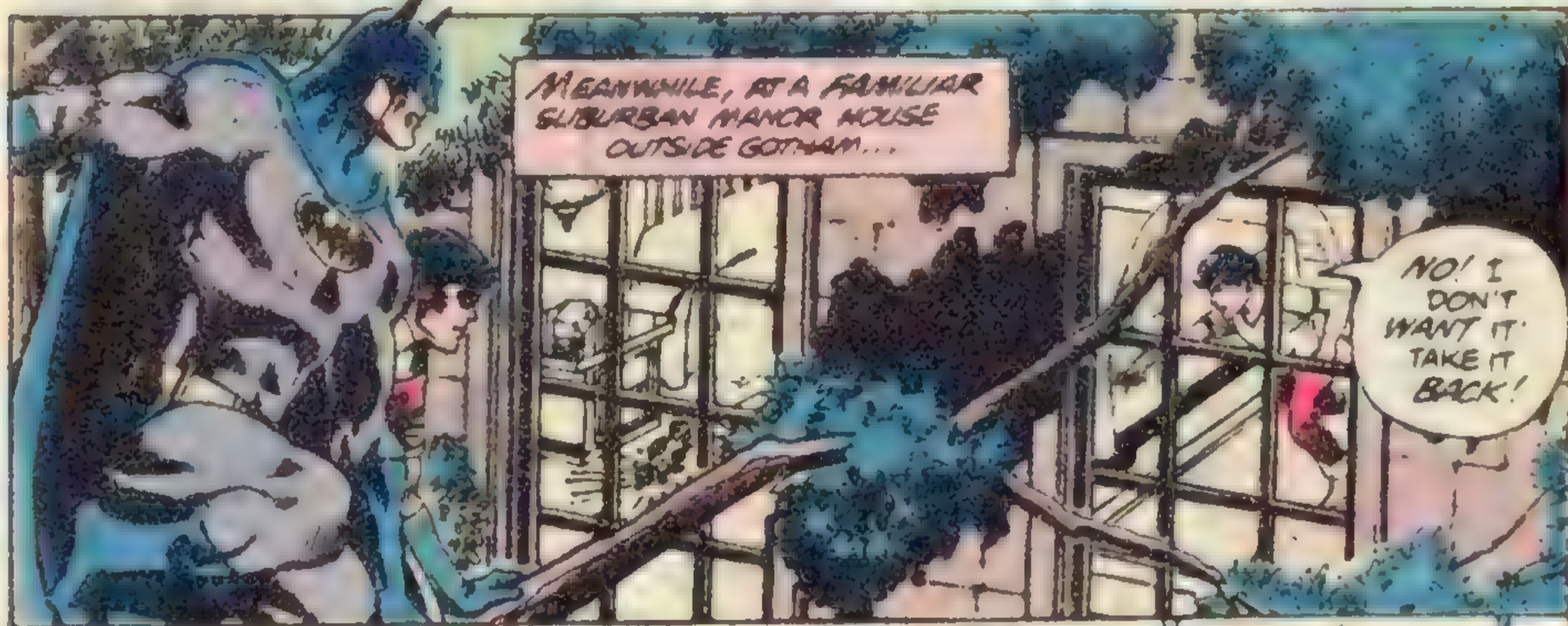
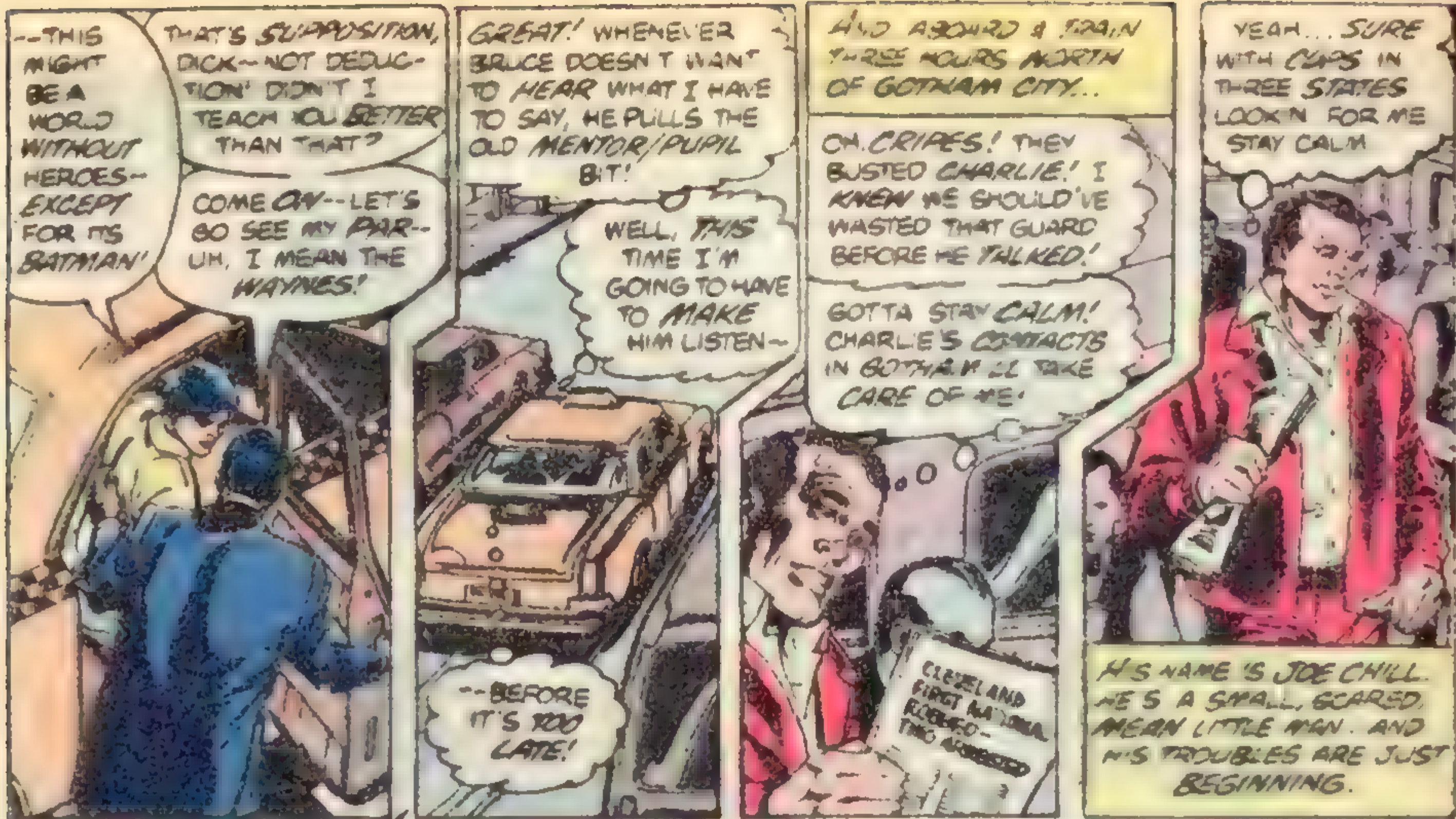
I WONDER-- COULD YOU SHOW ME WHERE THE SOCIAL REGISTER IS? I SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN...

WHAT A STRANGE WORLD! PLENTY OF CRIME, TERRORISM, WAR-- BUT NOT A SINGLE COSTUMED HERO!

OF COURSE, THERE WEREN'T ANY COSTUMED HEROES ON OUR EARTH TILL A FEW DECADES AGO-- BUT--

GOTHAM NEWS
A SPECIAL
DOWNTOWN SNIPER KILLS FIVE
CONFLICT CONTINUES IN...

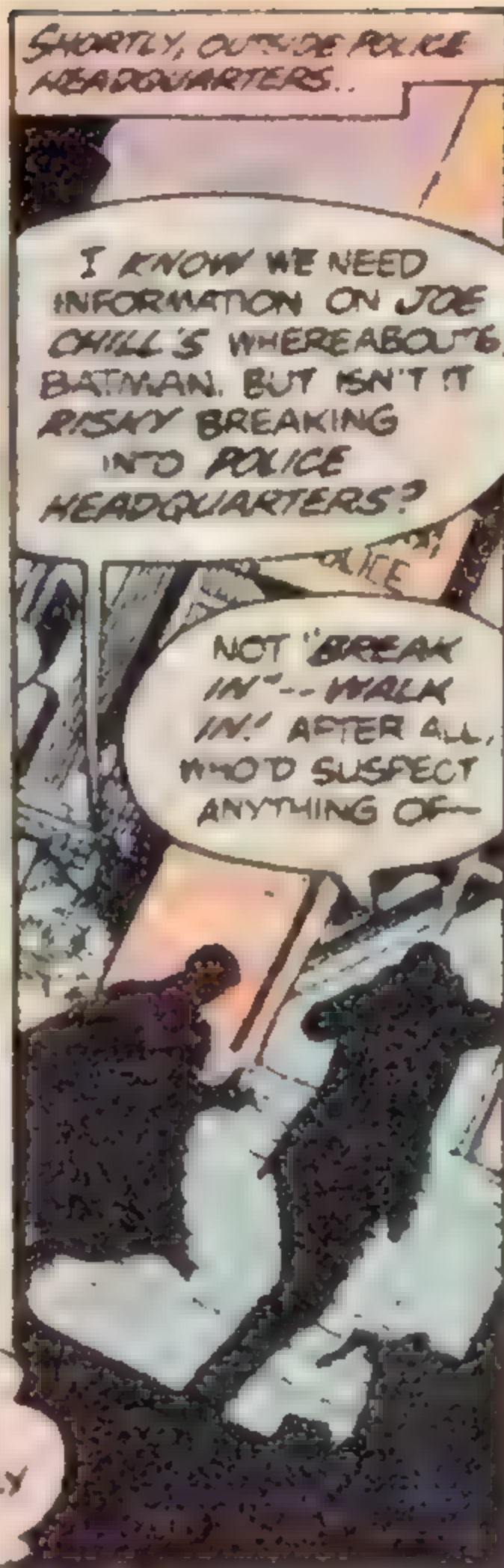






THIS BRUCE WAYNE IS A SPOILED LITTLE BRAT!

I WONDER... IF WE STOP HIS PARENTS' MURDER, WILL HE GROW UP TO BECOME THE BORED PLAYBOY THAT BATMAN ONLY PRETENDS TO BE?



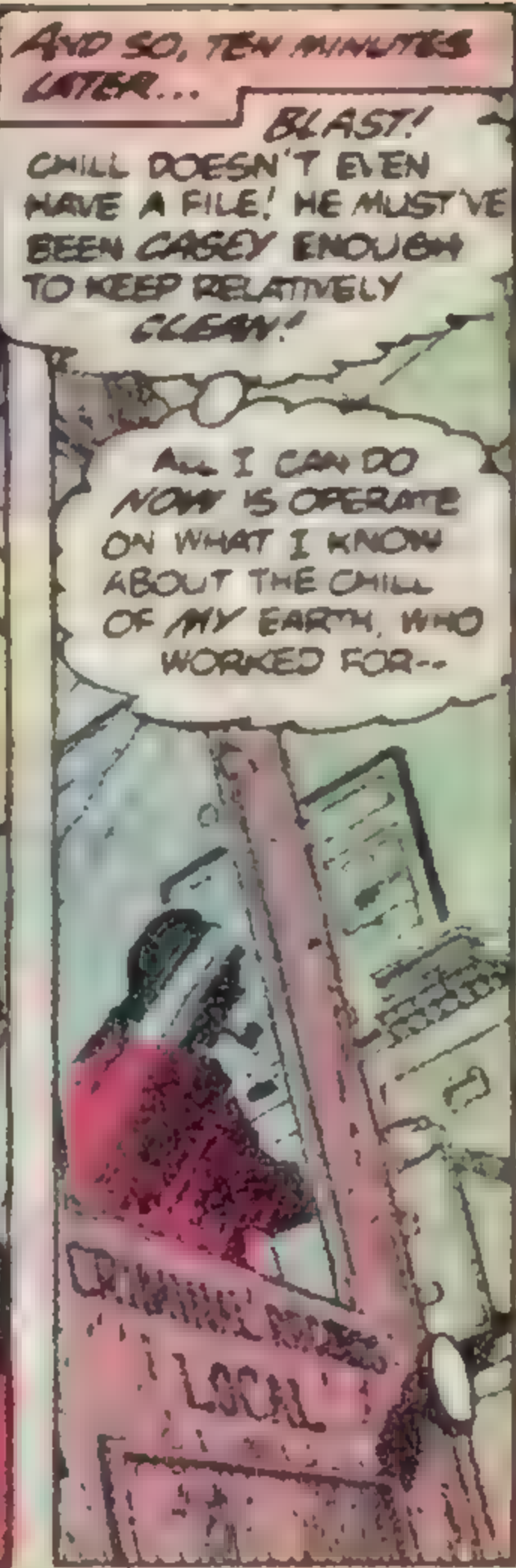
SHORTLY, OUTSIDE POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

I KNOW WE NEED INFORMATION ON JOE CHILL'S WHEREABOUTS, BATMAN. BUT ISN'T IT RISKY BREAKING INTO POLICE HEADQUARTERS?

NOT "BREAK IN"--WALK IN! AFTER ALL, WHO'D SUSPECT ANYTHING OF--



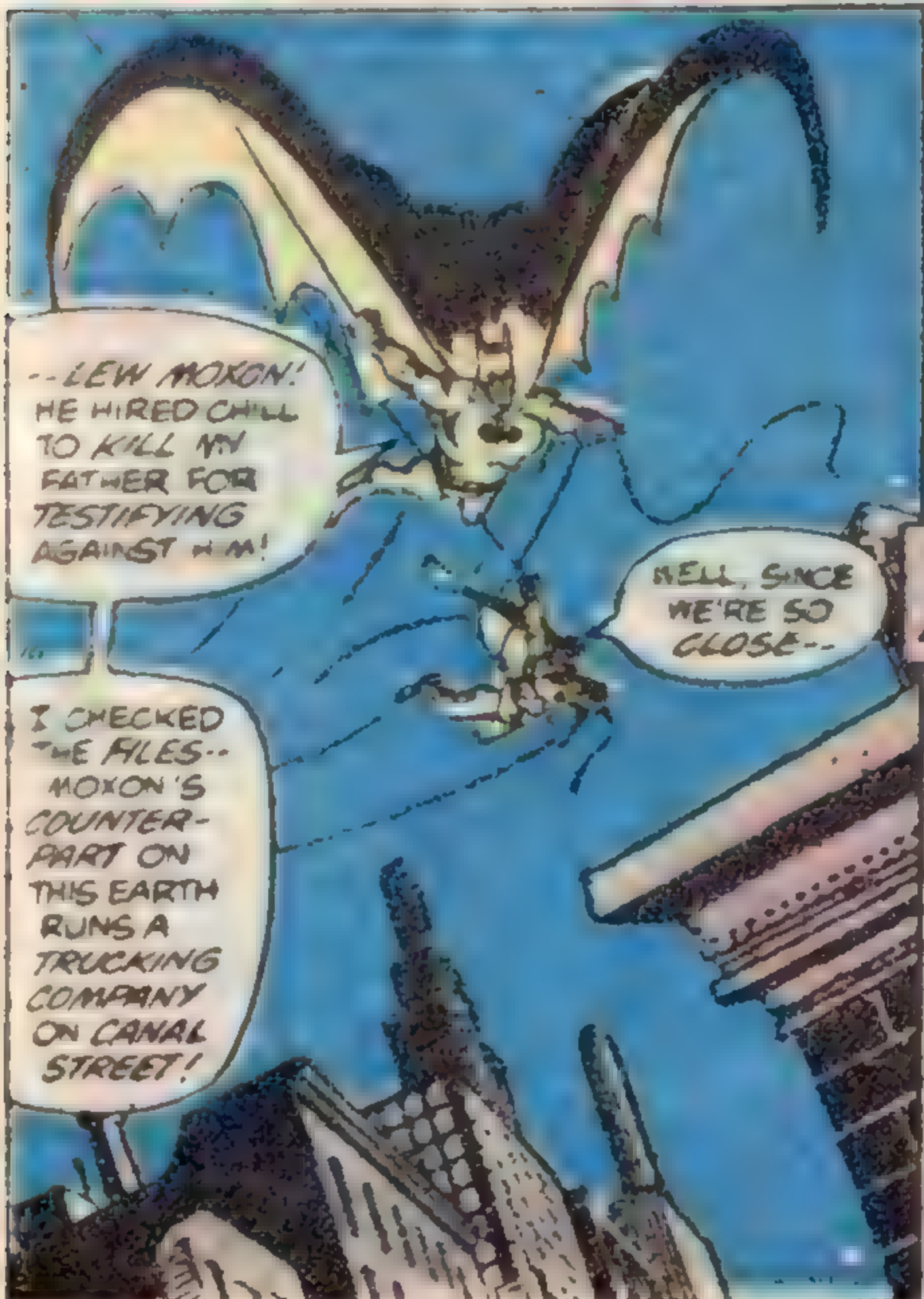
--DETECTIVE LIEUTENANT JAMES GORDON?



AND SO, TEN MINUTES LATER...

BLAST! CHILL DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A FILE! HE MUST'VE BEEN CASEY ENOUGH TO KEEP RELATIVELY CLEAN!

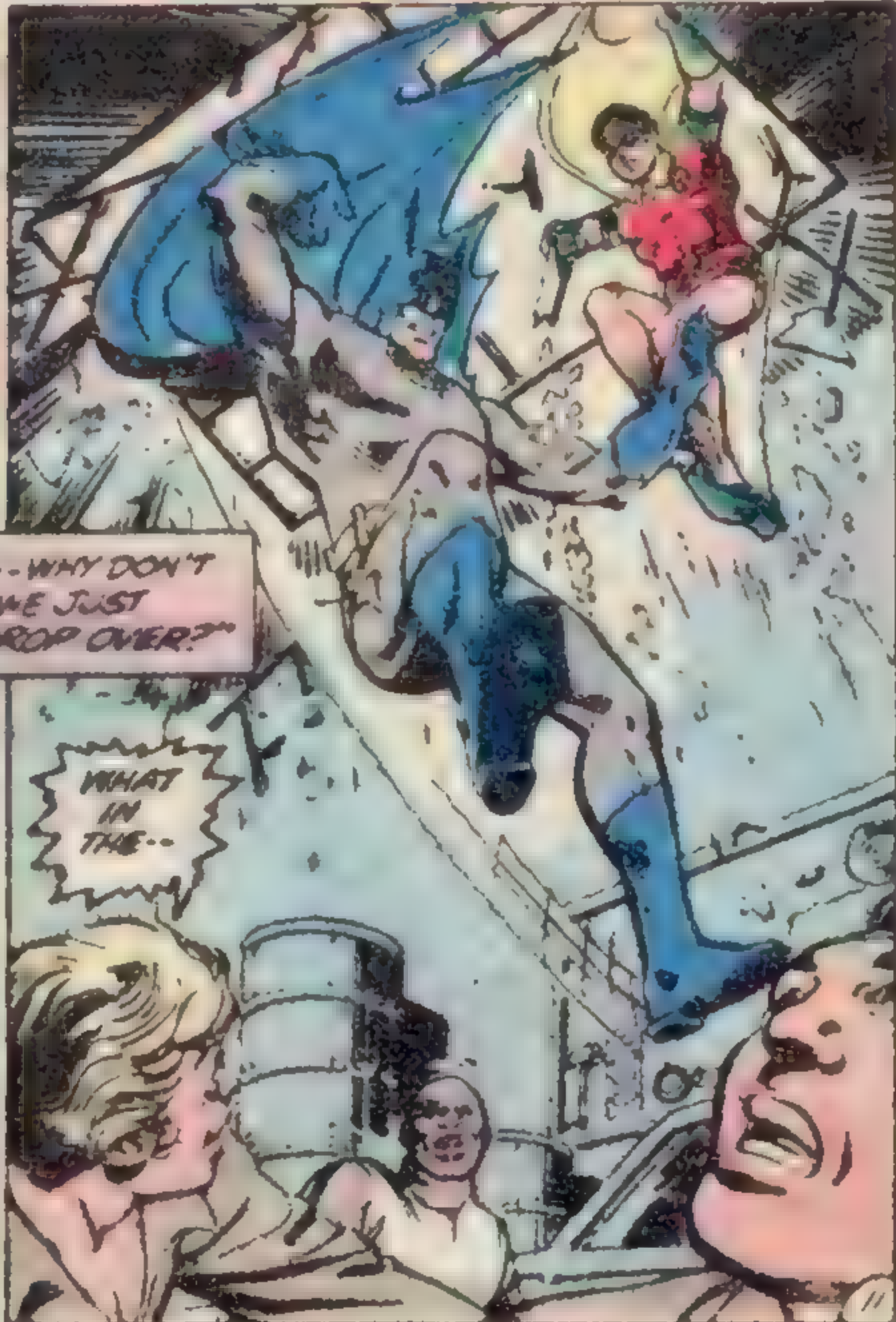
ALL I CAN DO NOW IS OPERATE ON WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE CHILL OF MY EARTH, WHO WORKED FOR--



--LEW MOXON! HE HIRED CHILL TO KILL MY FATHER FOR TESTIFYING AGAINST HIM!

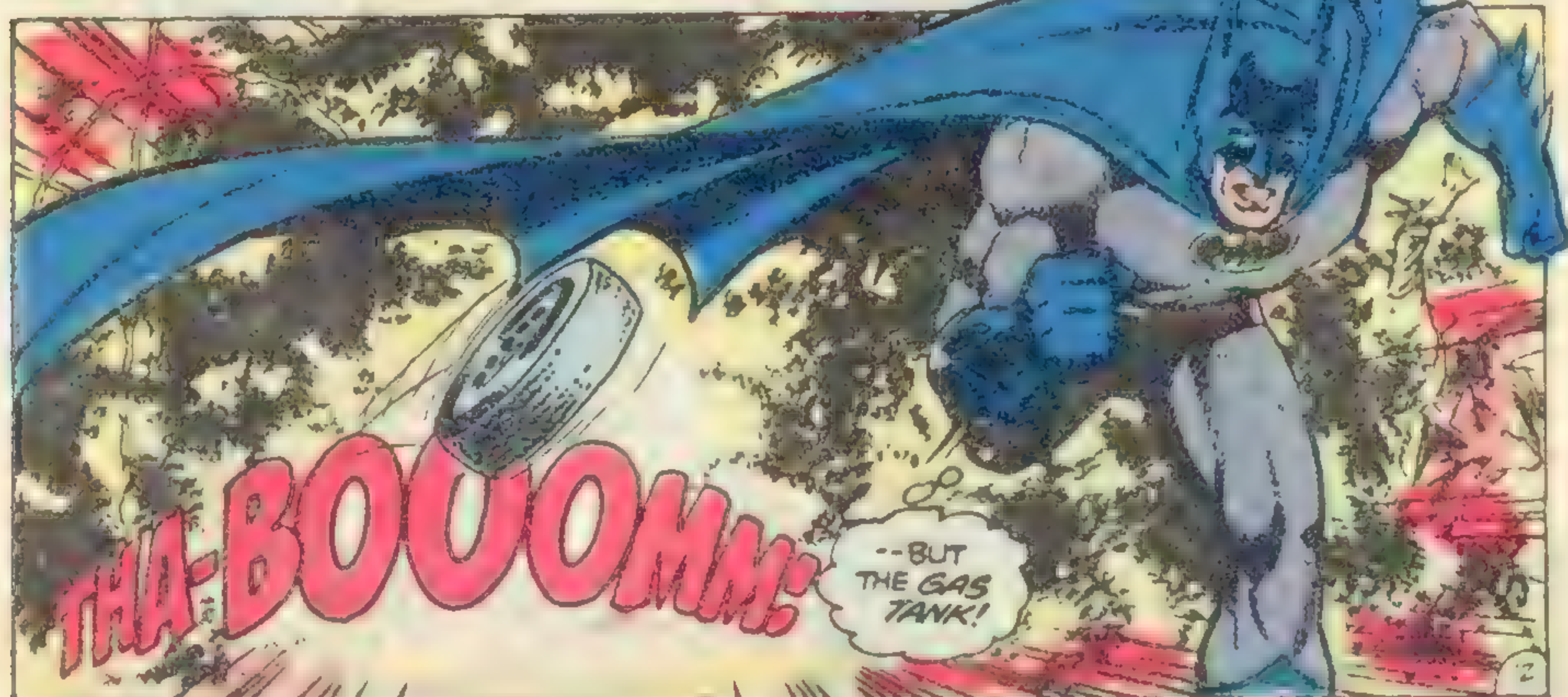
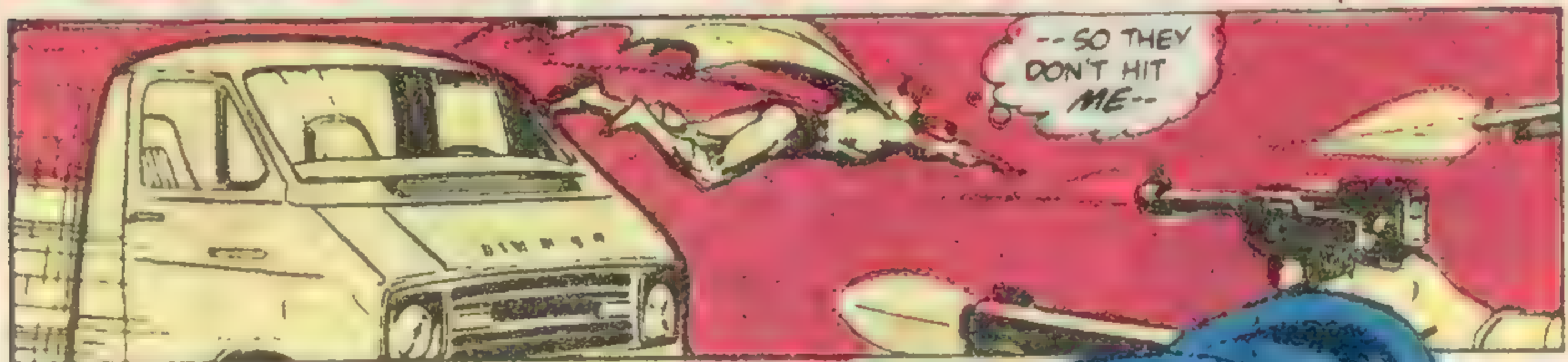
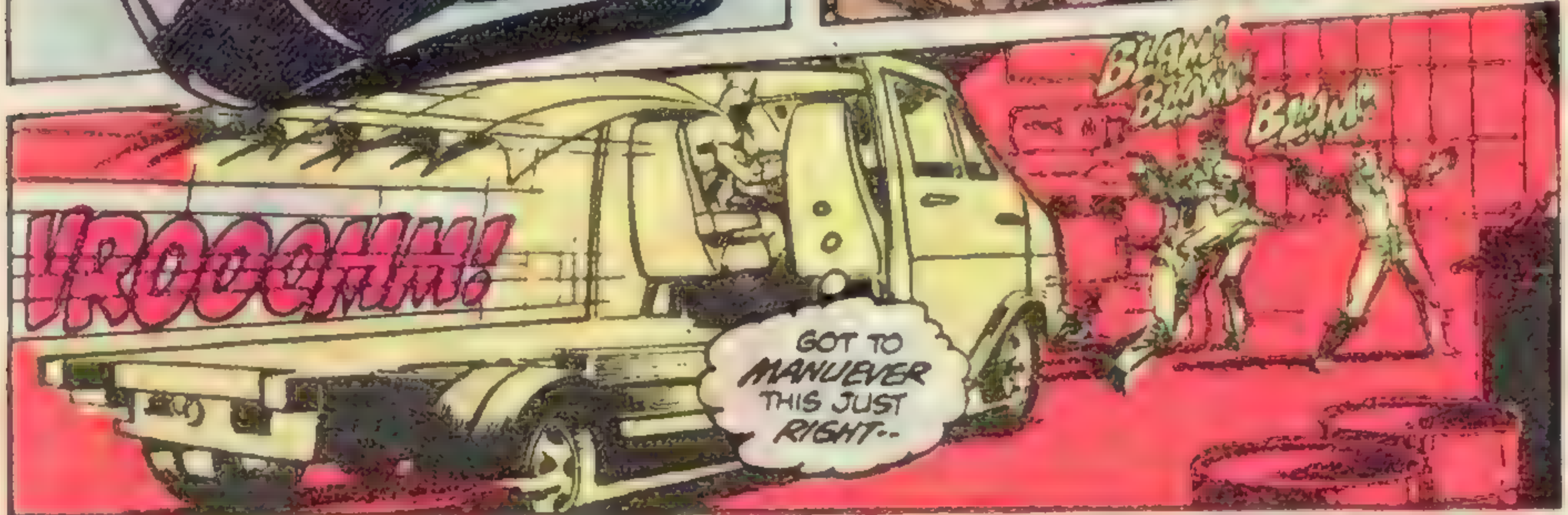
I CHECKED THE FILES-- MOXON'S COUNTER-PART ON THIS EARTH RUNS A TRUCKING COMPANY ON CANAL STREET!

WELL, SINCE WE'RE SO CLOSE--



--WHY DON'T WE JUST DROP OVER?

WHAT IN THE--



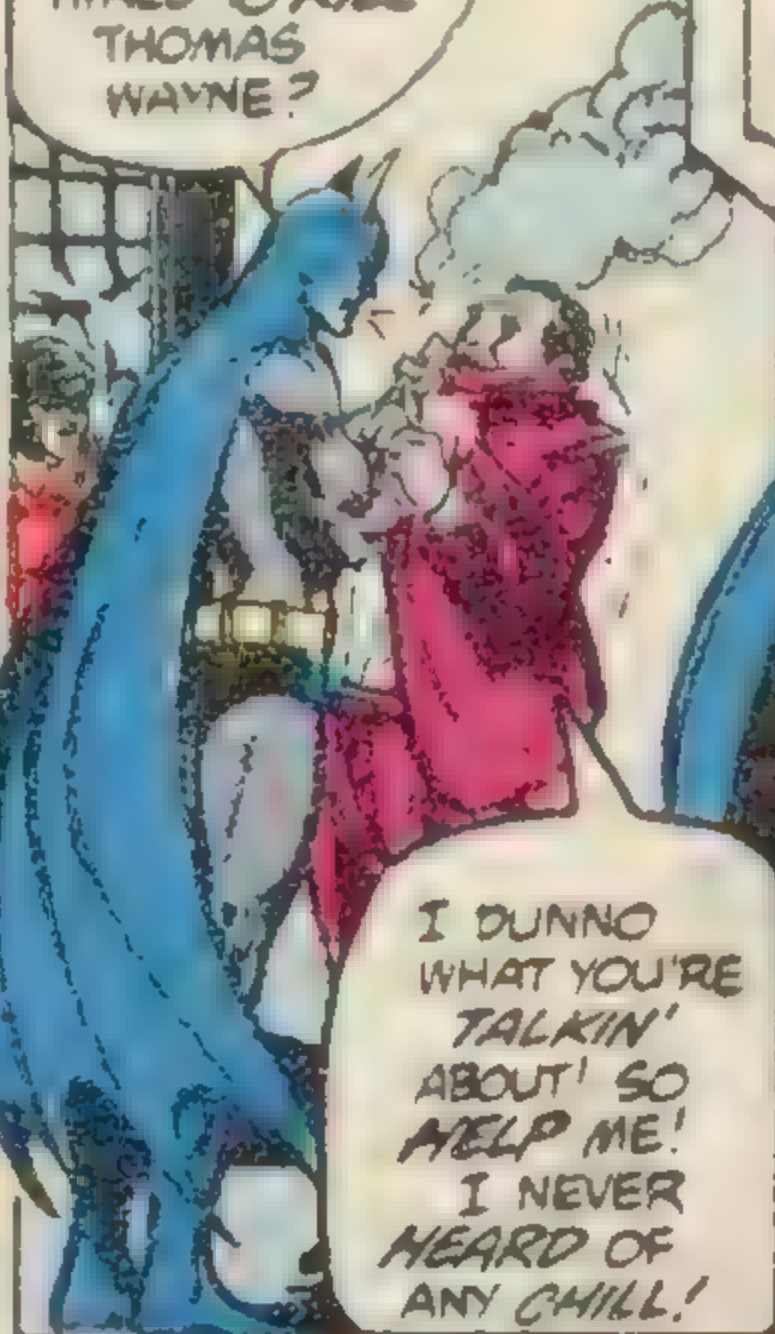
WHILE THE THUGS ARE TEMPORARILY STUNNED BY THE BLAST--



GOING SOMEWHERE, MOXON?

WHO--WHO ARE YOU? HOW D'YOU KNOW MY NAME?

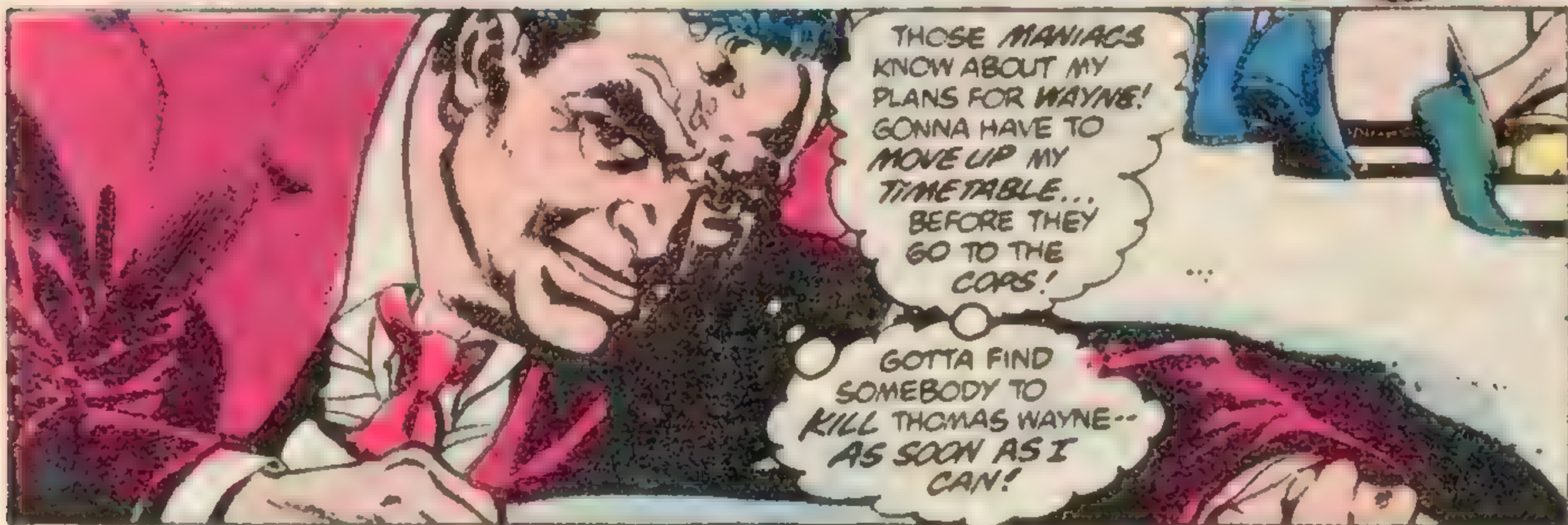
I'M ASKING THE QUESTIONS. MOXON! WHERE'S JOE CHILL-- THE THUG YOU'VE HIRED TO KILL THOMAS WAYNE?



I DUNNO WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT! SO HELP ME! I NEVER HEARD OF ANY CHILL!

LISTEN TO ME, MOXON! IF ANY HARM COMES TO THE WAYNES-- I'LL BE BACK! AND THIS TIME--

--I'LL DO A LOT MORE THAN BLOW UP ONE OF YOUR TRUCKS!



THOSE MANIACS KNOW ABOUT MY PLANS FOR WAYNE! GONNA HAVE TO MOVE UP MY TIMETABLE... BEFORE THEY GO TO THE COPS!

GOTTA FIND SOMEBODY TO KILL THOMAS WAYNE-- AS SOON AS I CAN!



TIME'S RUNNING OUT! IT'S THE 21ST OF THE MONTH-- MY PARENTS WERE KILLED ON THE 26TH!

IF WE CAN'T FIND CHILL IN FIVE DAYS-- THEN WE FOLLOW THE WAYNES' EVERY MOVE.

AND WAIT FOR CHILL TO MAKE HIS!

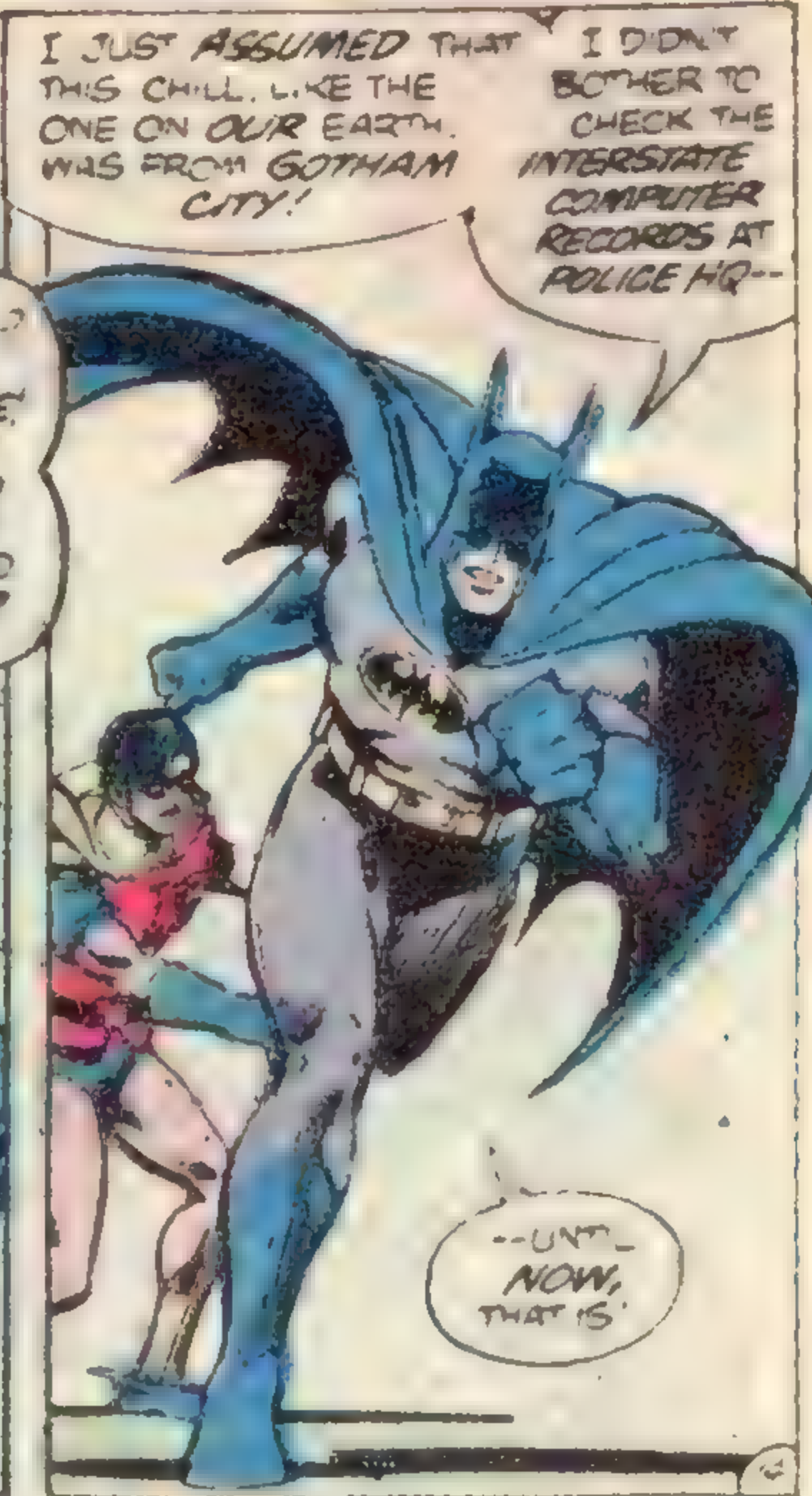
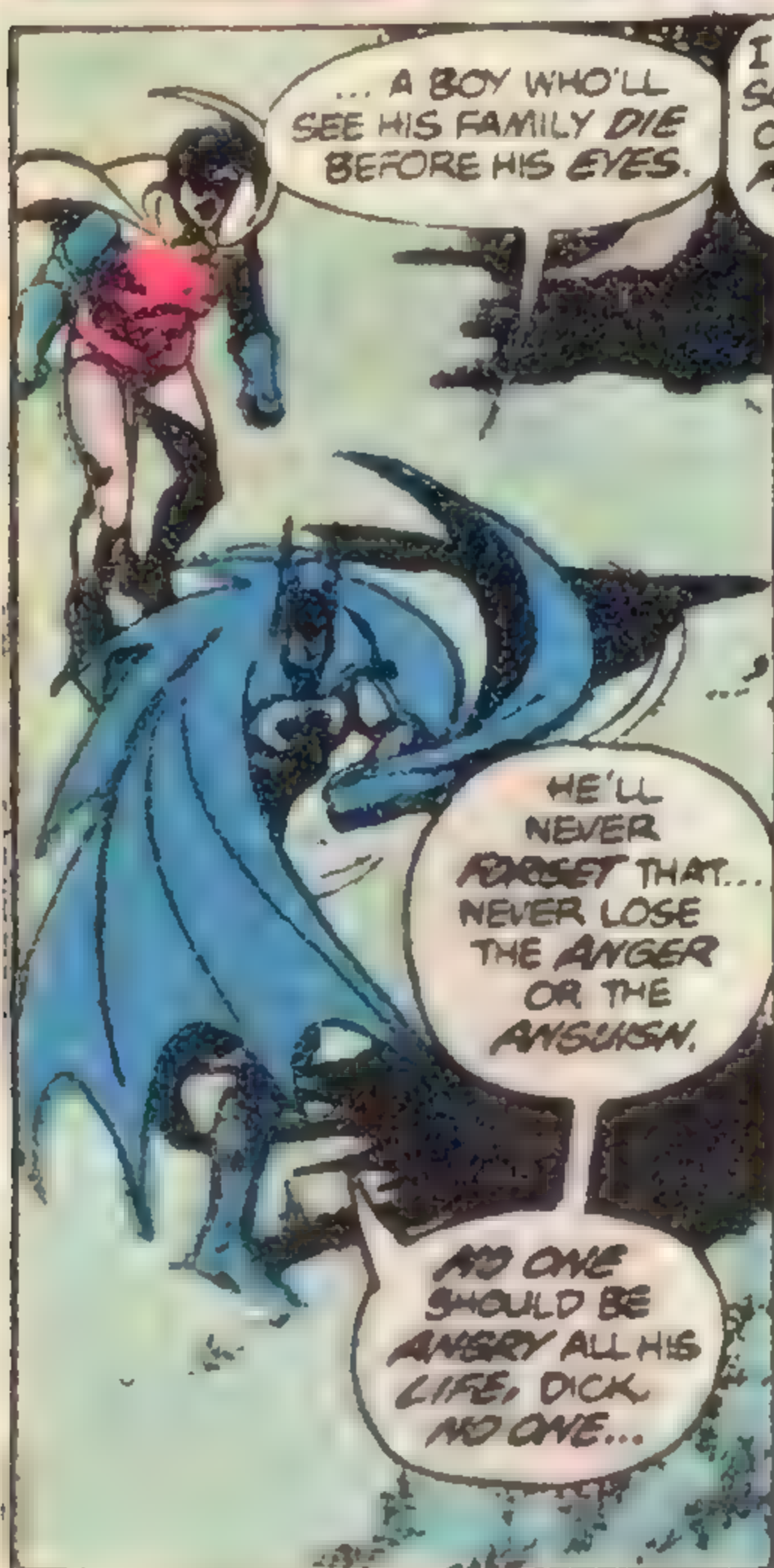
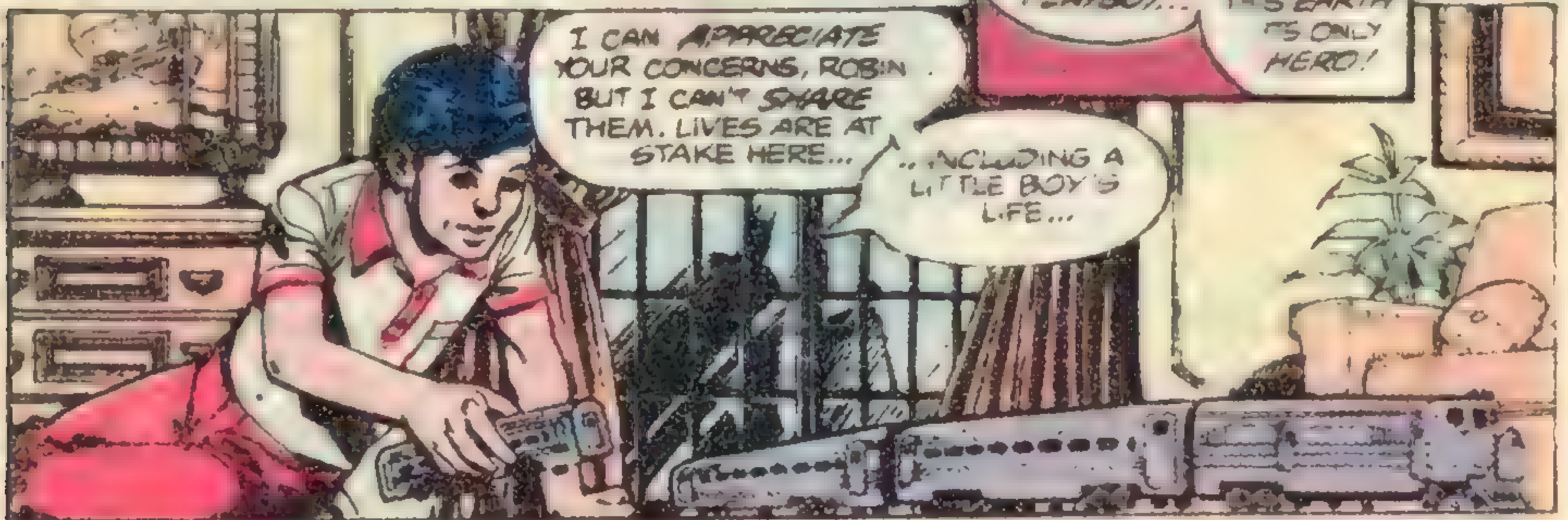
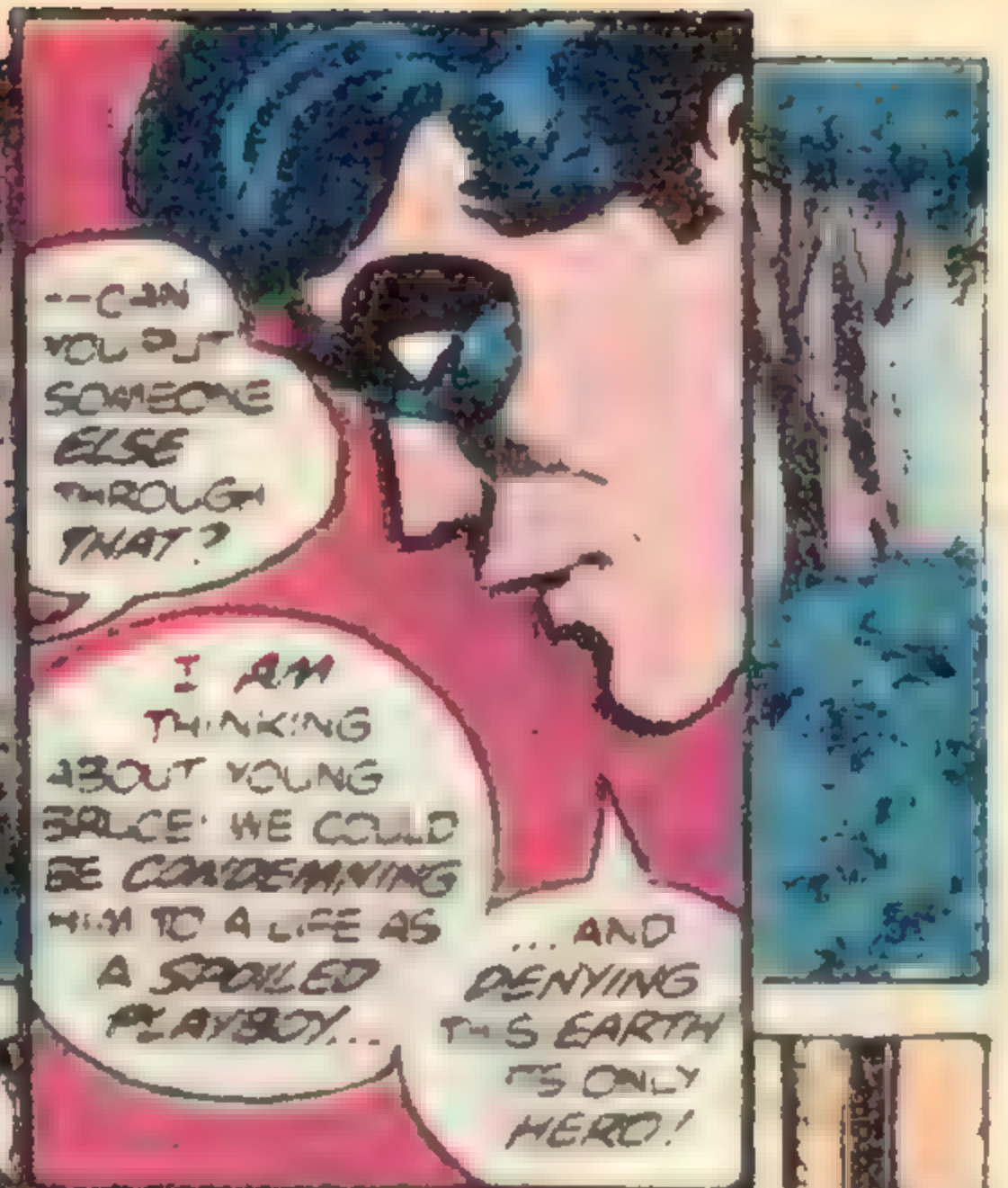
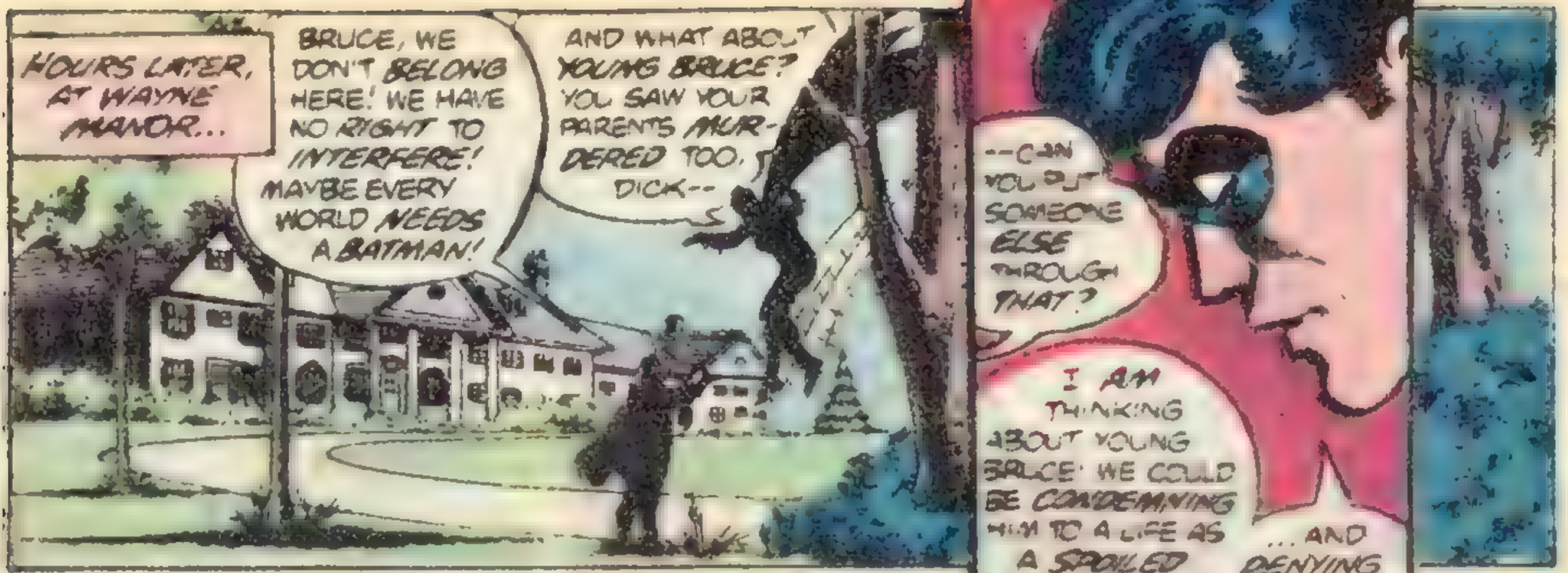
WHILE, JUST A HUNDRED FEET BELOW...

MADE IT! NOW TO LOOK UP-- WHAT'S HIS NAME...?

LEW MOXON! YEAH! CHARLIE SAID MOXON'S ALWAYS GOT WORK FOR A GUY!

SHOOT, RIGHT ABOUT NOW I'D BE WILLIN' TO DO ANYTHING...





BUT ONLY MINUTES AFTER THE BATMAN LEAVES...

GET YOUR COAT, BRUCE-- YOUR FATHER'S TAKING US TO A MOVIE!

BUT I WAS PLAYING WITH MY TRAINS--!

YOU CAN DO THAT LATER, SON.

LEAVING FOR A MOVIE? BUT BATMAN'S PARENTS WERE KILLED COMING HOME FROM A MOVIE!

OF ALL THE TIMES FOR BATMAN TO SPLIT! SOMETHING TELLS ME I'D BETTER STICK CLOSE TO THE WAYNES--

--AND PRAY!

MEANWHILE, IN POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

BINGO! ACCORDING TO THIS, THERE'S AN INTER-STATE BULLETIN OUT ON CHILL... AND IT'S BELIEVED HE'S HEADED FOR GOTHAM!

NOW TO SEE IF I CAN--

GOOD EVENING, ENJOYING YOURSELF?

DON'T MOVE, PLEASE.

I ASSURE YOU. I'M QUITE A GOOD SHOT.

AND IN THE STREETS OF GOTHAM...

BRUCE SAID THE MURDER WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN FOR FIVE MORE DAYS, BUT-- HE MAY HAVE BEEN WRONG!

IT MAY BE UP TO ME TO STOP THIS-- AND I STILL DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD!

BATMAN, WHERE ARE YOU?!

DIANE KEATON
NIE HALL

I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT ALL, BUT I'M TRYING TO STOP A MURDERER FROM KILLING TWO INNOCENT PEOPLE!

GORDON CONSIDERS... AND SOMETHING IN HIM RESPONDS TO THIS STRANGER'S VOICE, HE CAN'T SAY WHY...

...BUT HE DECIDES TO TRUST HIM.

LIEUTENANT... IN ANOTHER WORLD, ANOTHER TIME... WE'RE FRIENDS. IF YOU CAN FEEL EVEN A HINT OF THAT... TRUST ME LET ME GO. PLEASE!

MINUTES LATER, IN A HOTEL ON DUMONT STREET...

GORDON'S INFORMANTS SAID CHILL TOOK A ROOM IN THIS--

GOOD LORD!

CHILL?

CHILL! WHAT HAPPENED? WHO DID THIS?

M-MOXON! WENT TO SEE HIM.. TOLD HIM MY NAME... HE THREW ME OUT... SAID SOME MANIAC WAS AFTER ME...

I GOT BACK... AN' ONE OF HIS GOONS WAS WAITING... ON HIS WAY TO ANOTHER HIT...

ANOTHER HIT?

YEH... SOME DOCTOR... FUNNY, AIN'T IT... ALL MY LIFE... PART OF SOMEBODY ELSE'S GANG... SOMEBODY ELSE'S ORDERS...

AN' NOW I GET OFFED... ON THE WAY TO SOMEBODY ELSE'S FUNERAL...

MONDAY

21

CHILL ISN'T THE KILLER! SOMEONE ELSE IS-- AND IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TONIGHT!

BUT NOW? TODAY'S THE 21ST.. IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN FOR FIVE--

OH NO! OF COURSE! I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED!

MY PARENTS DIED TWENTY YEARS AGO! IN THAT TIME, THERE HAVE BEEN FIVE LEAP YEARS--

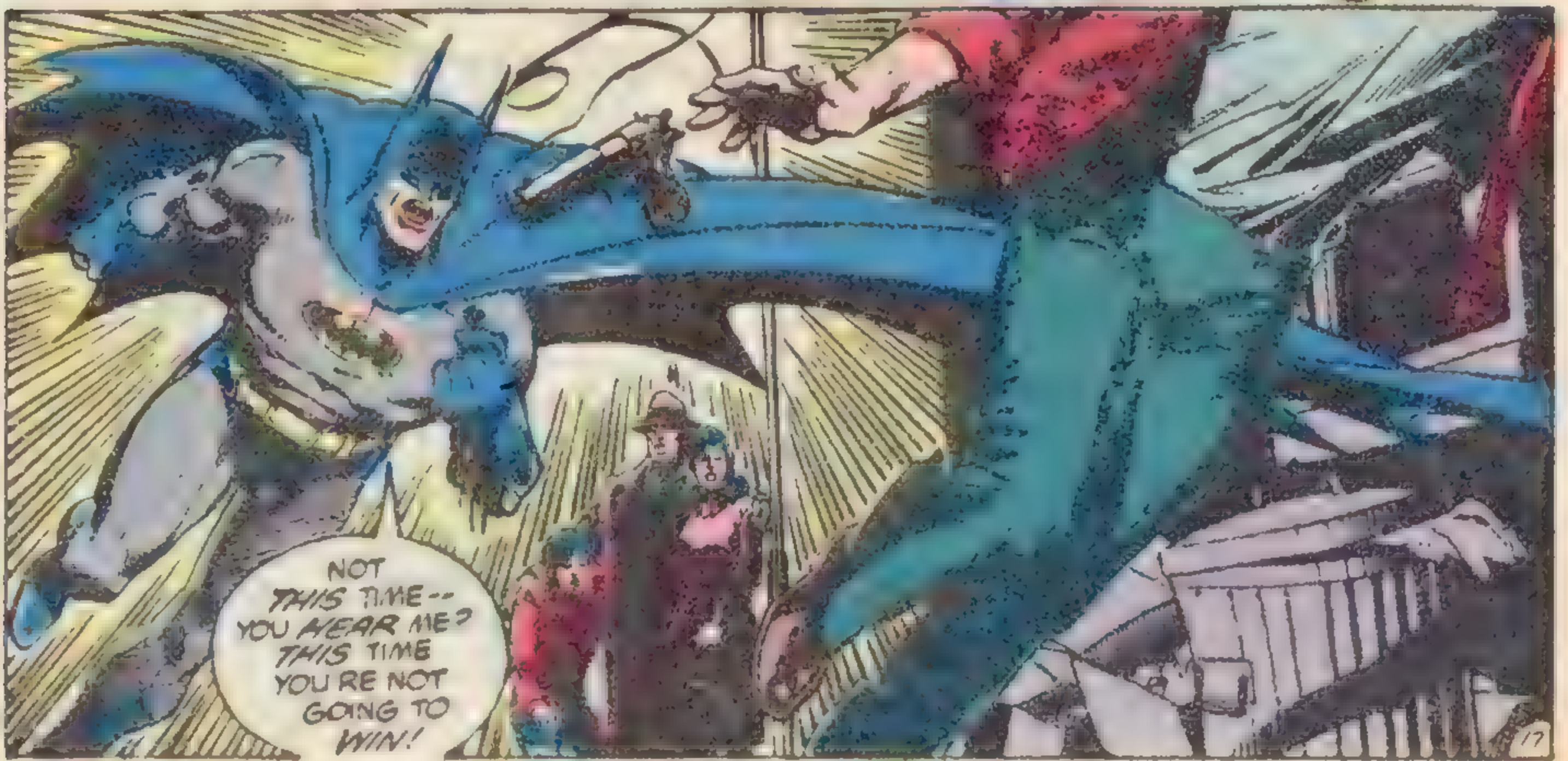
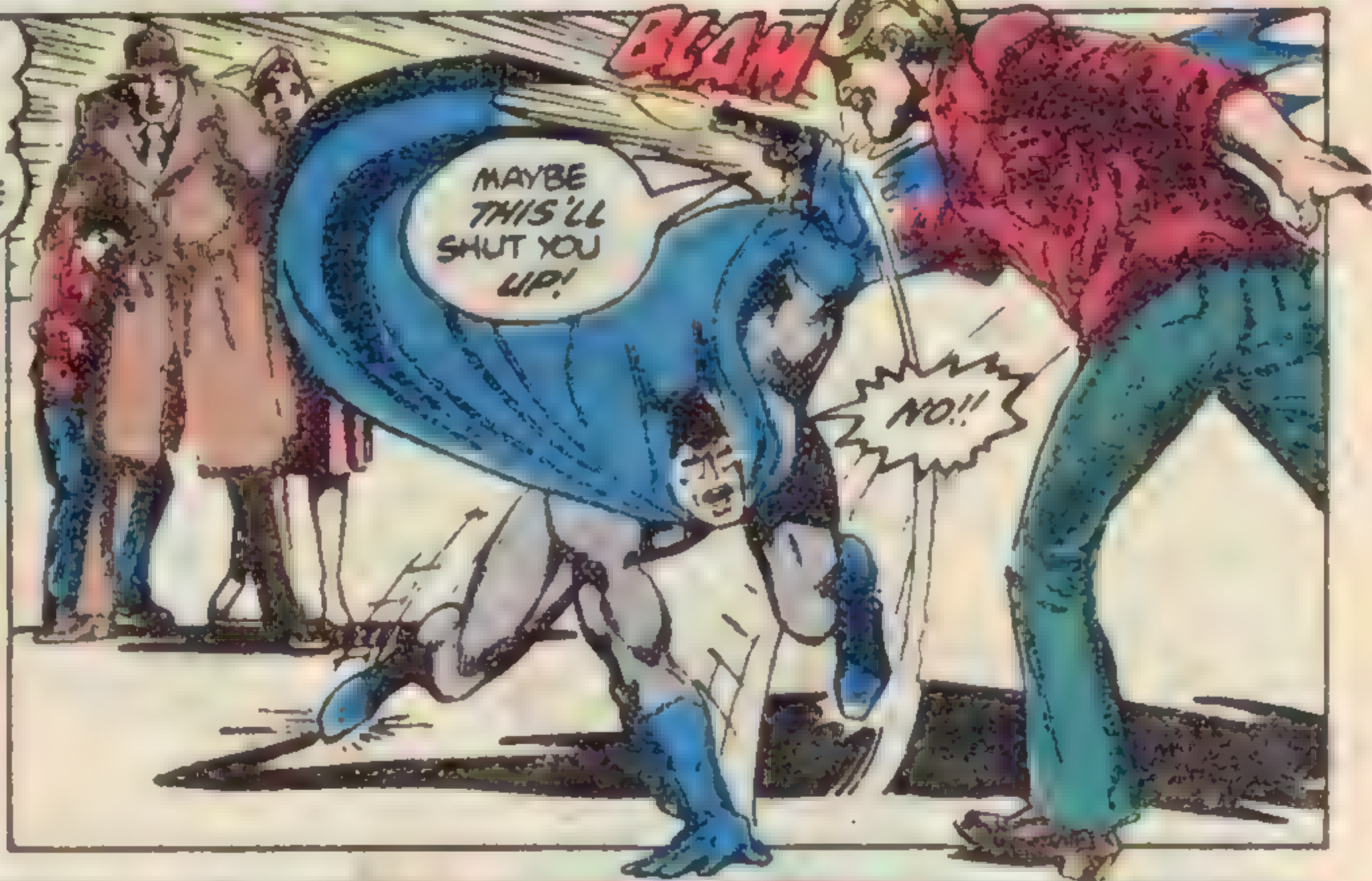
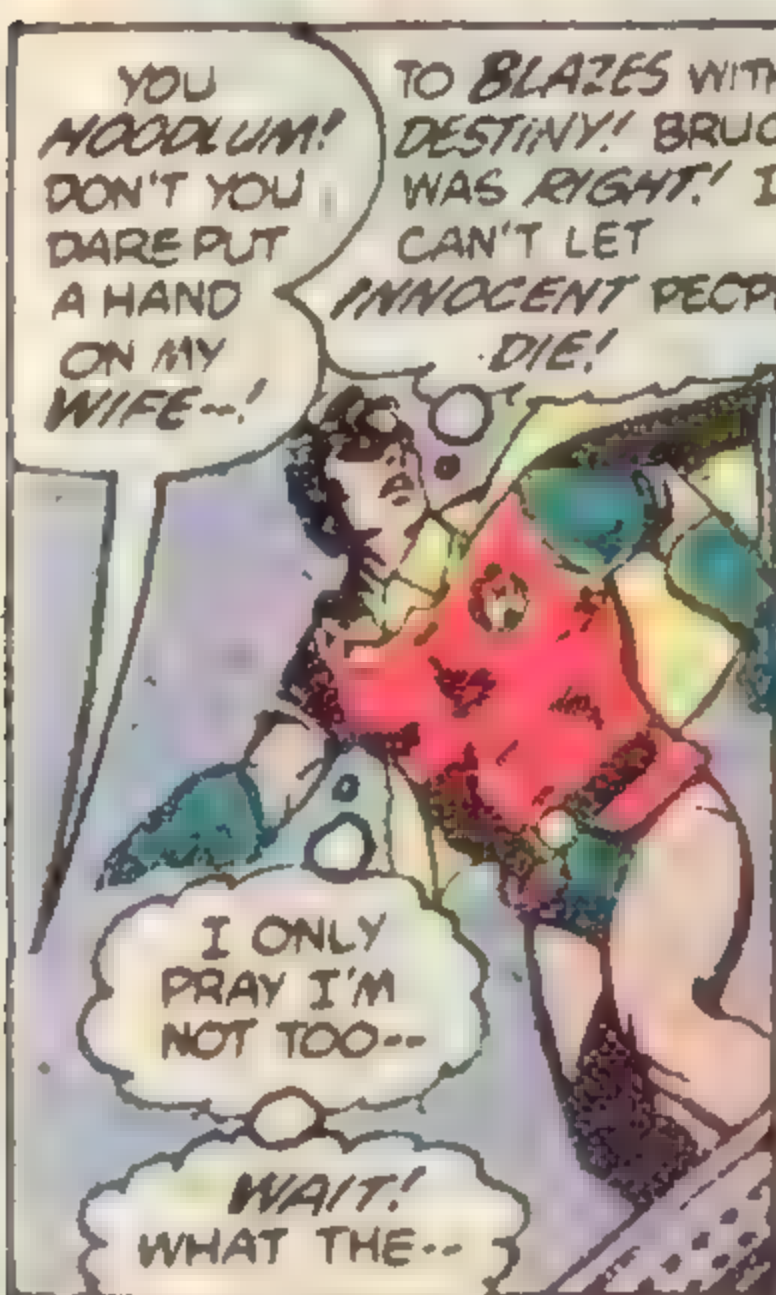
-- FIVE EXTRA DAYS...

...THE CALENDAR DOESN'T RECORD!

FOR ALL PURPOSES, TONIGHT IS--

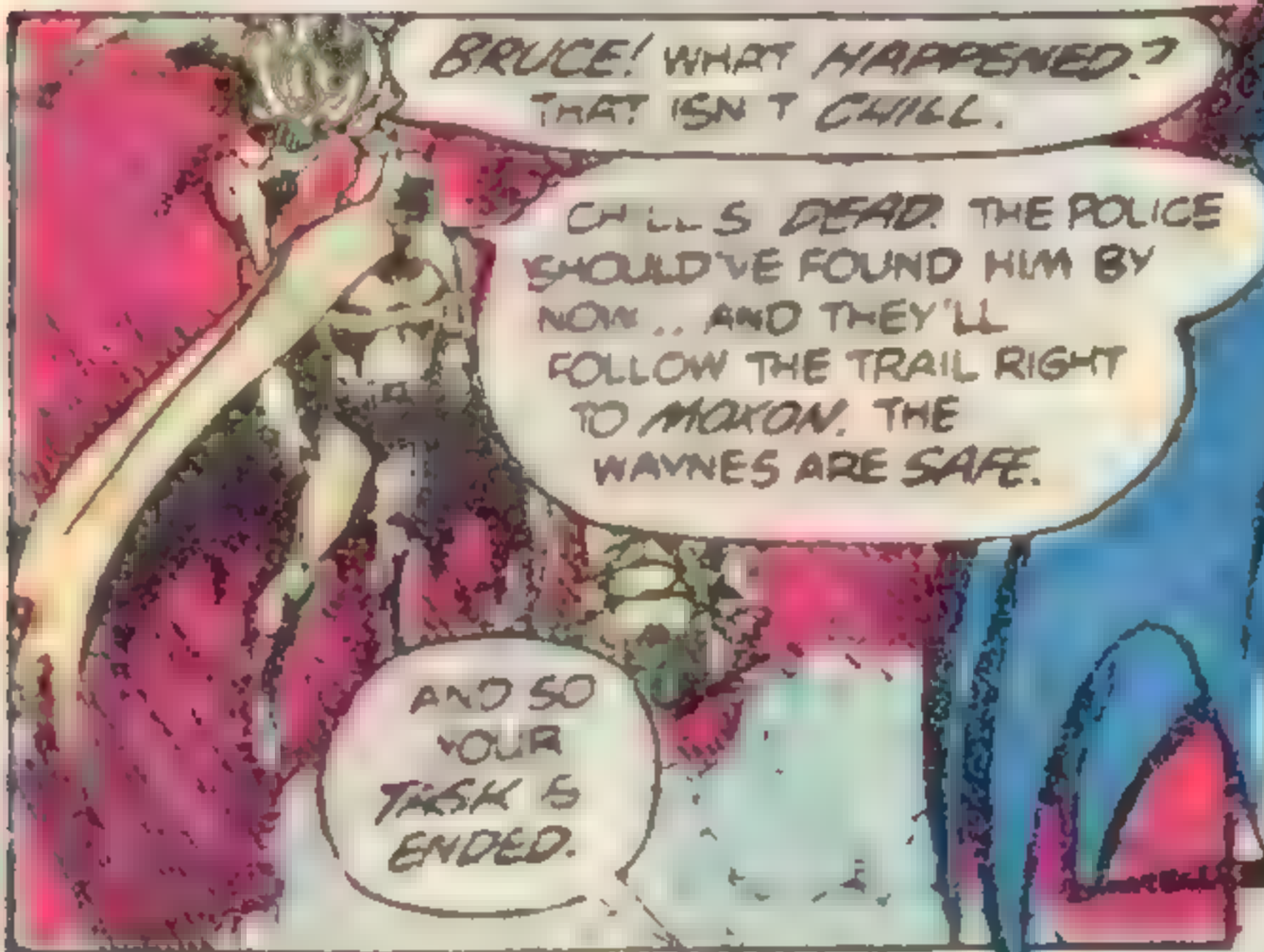
--THE NIGHT OF THE 26TH--

--AND HEAVEN HELP ME... IT'S HAPPENING ALL OVER AGAIN!





...I DIDN'T
FAIL THEM...



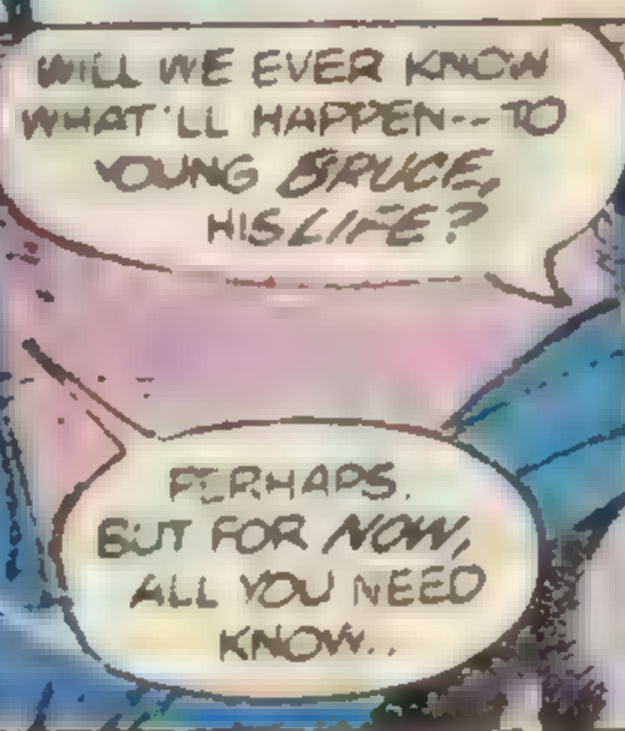
BRUCE! WHAT HAPPENED?
THAT ISN'T CHILL.

CHILL'S DEAD. THE POLICE
SHOULD'VE FOUND HIM BY
NOW... AND THEY'LL
FOLLOW THE TRAIL RIGHT
TO MOKON. THE
WAYNES ARE SAFE.

AND SO
YOUR
TASK IS
ENDED.



YOU MUST LEAVE NOW.
YOU ARE STRANGERS
HERE. AS MUCH A
STRANGER AS I.



WILL WE EVER KNOW
WHAT'LL HAPPEN-- TO
YOUNG BRUCE,
HIS LIFE?

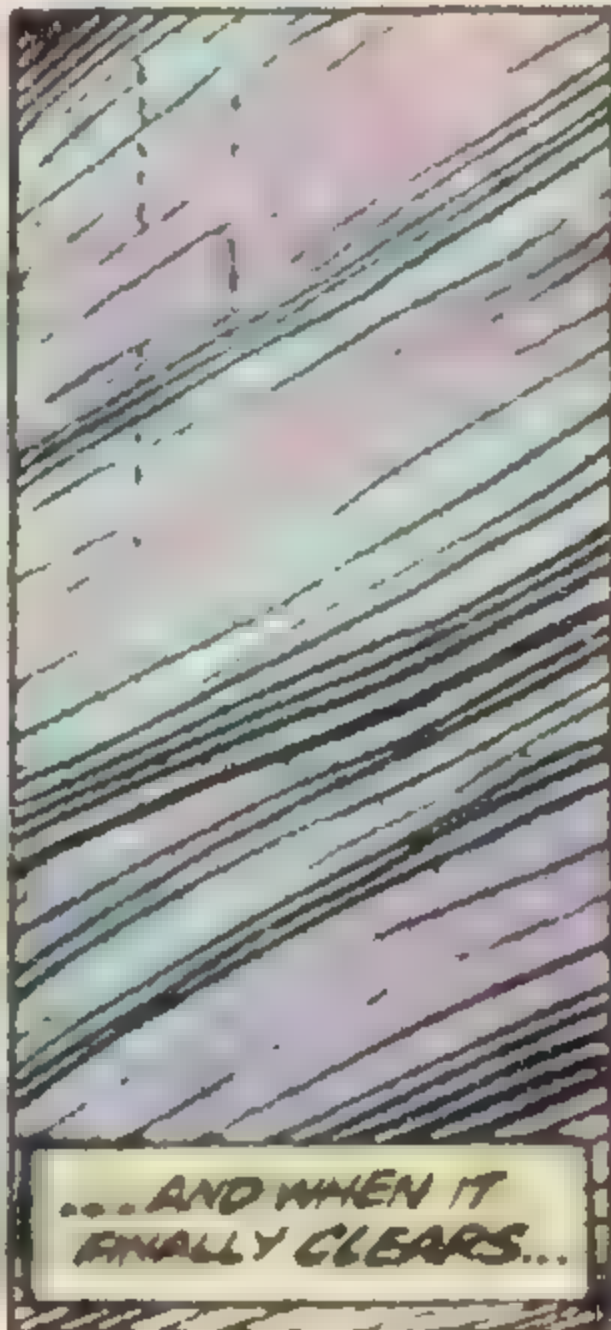
PERHAPS.
BUT FOR NOW,
ALL YOU NEED
KNOW...



...IS THAT YOU
SAVED TWO
LIVES... AND
ALTERED
FOREVER A
THIRD.

AMEN
TO
THAT.

THE DOOR STARTS TO CLOSE
IN AROUND THEM...

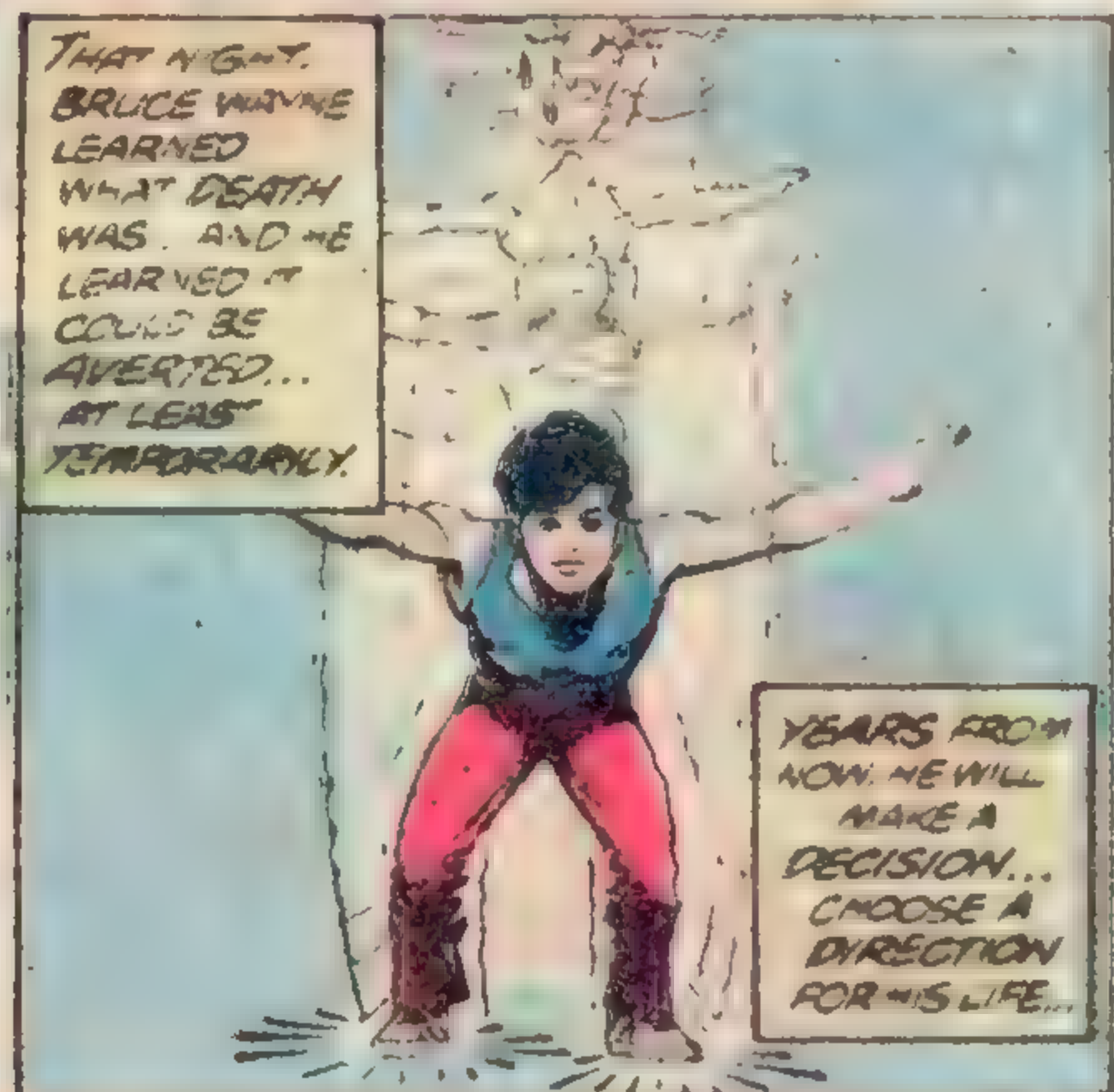
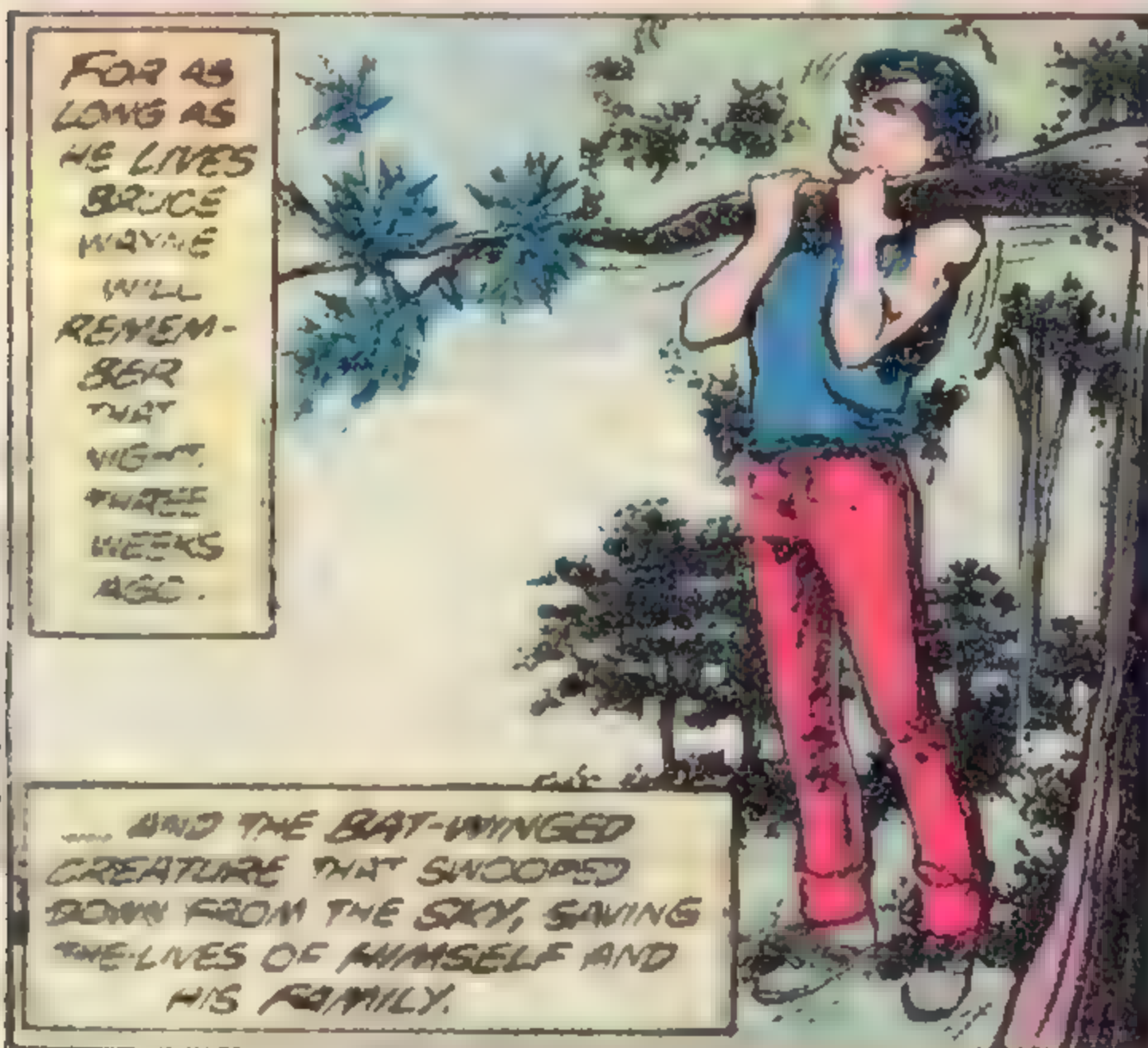


...AND WHEN IT
FINALLY CLEARS...



...THREE STRANGERS
HAVE RETURNED HOME.

EPILOGUE



IT BEGINS FOR BILLY BATSON AS HE SITS BEHIND THE WHIZ-TV NEWSDESK, GIVING THE NOON NEWS-CAST...

...AND THE MAYOR HAS ASKED PRESIDENT REAGAN TO DECLARE THE TOWN A DISASTER AREA, ELSEWHERE...

BILLY-- A LATE BULLETIN ON THE TELETYPE!

THANKS, WHITEY!

FOLKS, THE NOBEL COMMITTEE HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THAT THE WINNER OF THE 1981 NOBEL PRIZE FOR PHYSICS IS...

...HOLY MOLEY!...

...DR. THADDEUS BODUS SIVANA-- THE WORLD'S MOST EVIL SCIENTIST!

BUT HOW...?

IT SOUNDS IMPOSSIBLE-- BUT BELIEVE US, DEAR READER-- THERE IS A GOOD REASON FOR THE AWARDED OF...

Sivana's Nobel!!

SHAZAM!

IS THE MAGIC WORD
FOR THE ORIGINAL
CAPTAIN MARVEL



E. NELSON BRIDWELL .
WRITER

DON NEWTON .
PENCILLER

DAN ADKINS .
INKER

COSTANZA .
LETTERER

SERPE .
COLORIST

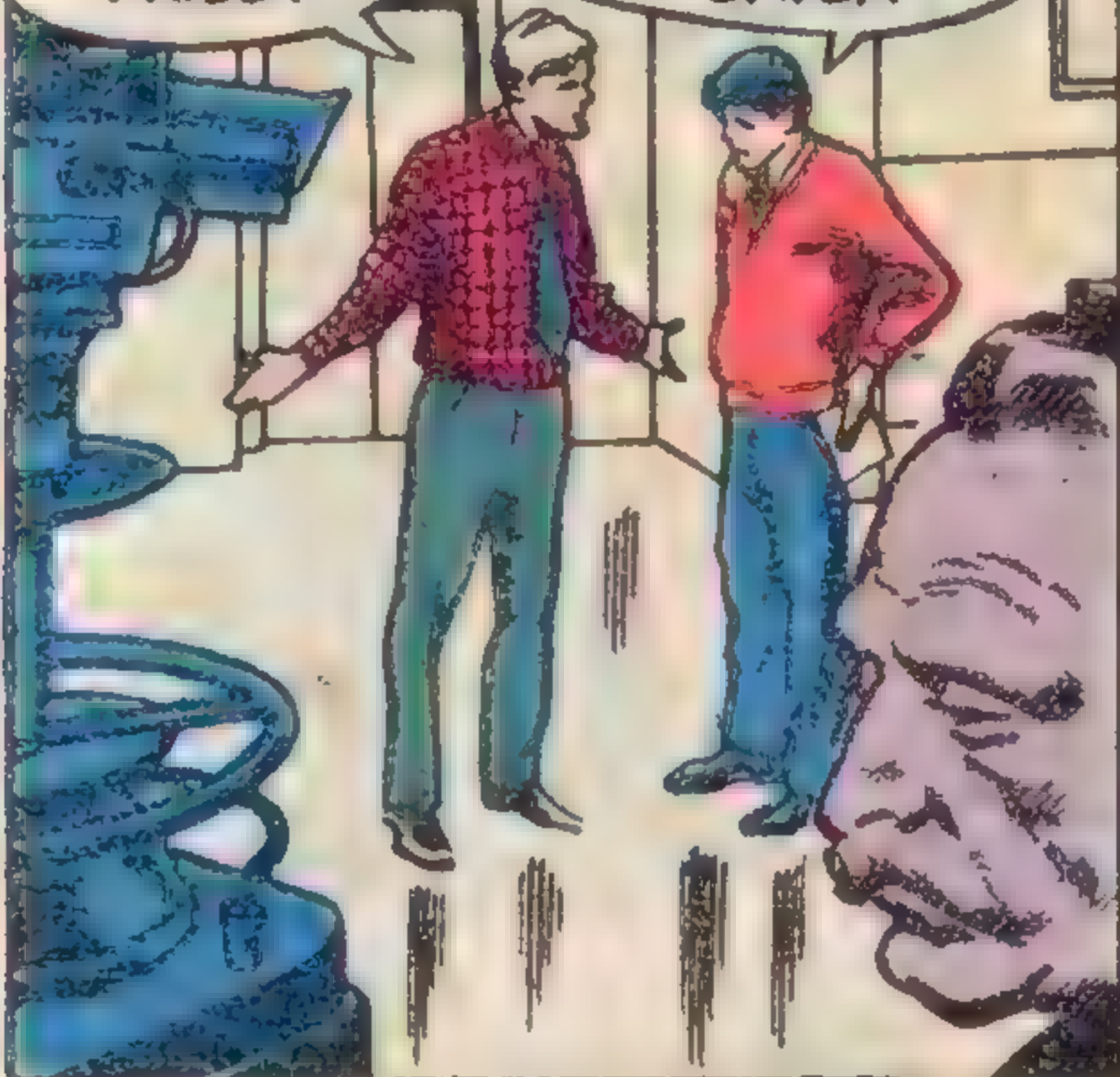
LEN WEIN .
EDITOR

AND WHEN THE NEWSCAST ENDS...

I DON'T GET IT, BILLY! THERE'S NEVER BEEN A GREATER VILLAIN THAN SIVANA! SO HOW COULD HE WIN A NOBEL PRIZE?

BECAUSE IN SPITE OF HIS WORST EFFORTS, HE'S ACTUALLY BENEFITED HUMANITY.

I'LL FILL YOU IN LATER!



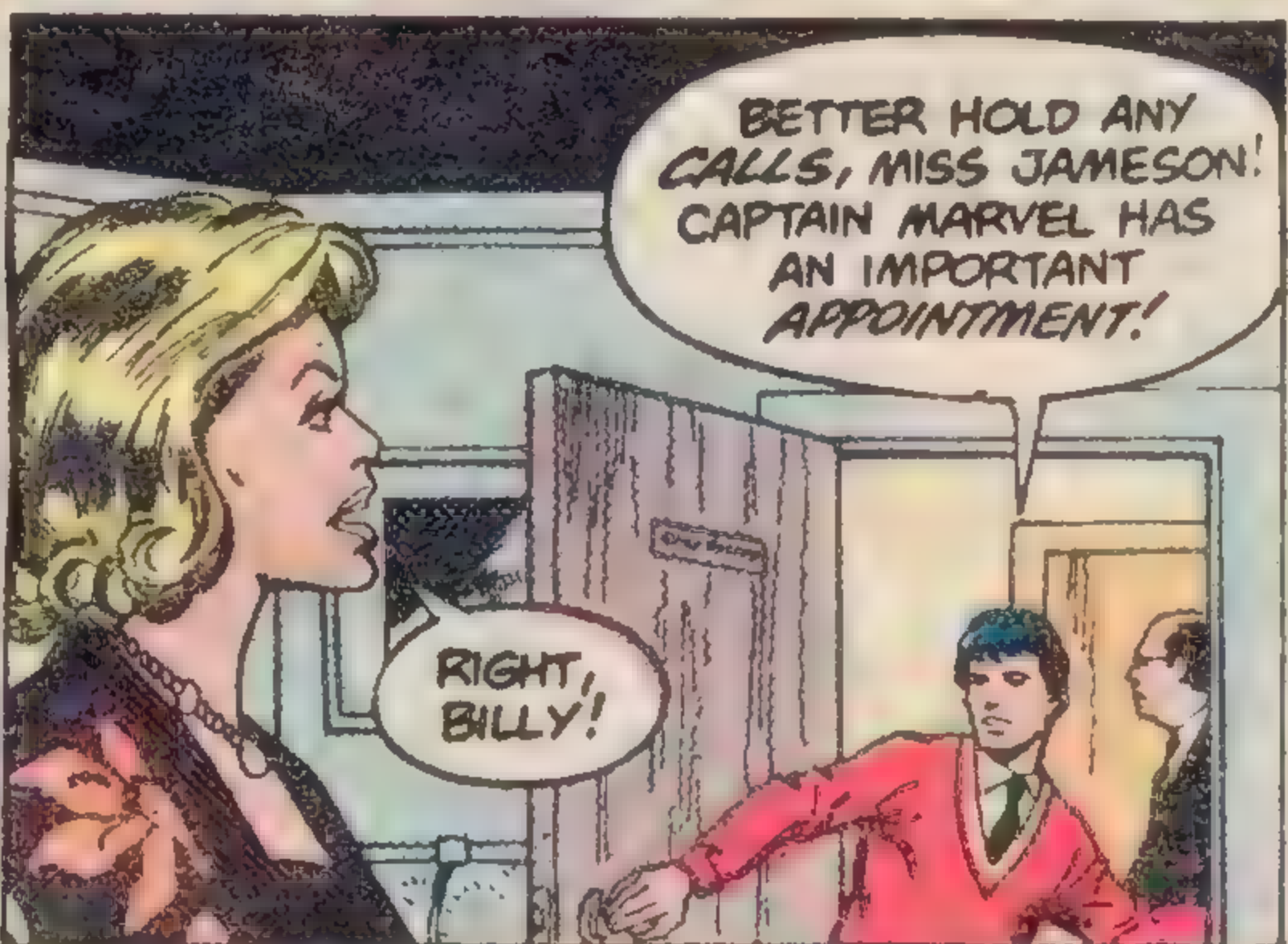
BUT RIGHT NOW I HAVE TO GET TO MY OFFICE!

I'M SURE CAPTAIN MARVEL WILL WANT TO BREAK THE NEWS TO SIVANA PERSONALLY!



BETTER HOLD ANY CALLS, MISS JAMESON! CAPTAIN MARVEL HAS AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT!

RIGHT, BILLY!



AND ONCE THE BOY NEWSCASTER IS ALONE IN HIS OFFICE...

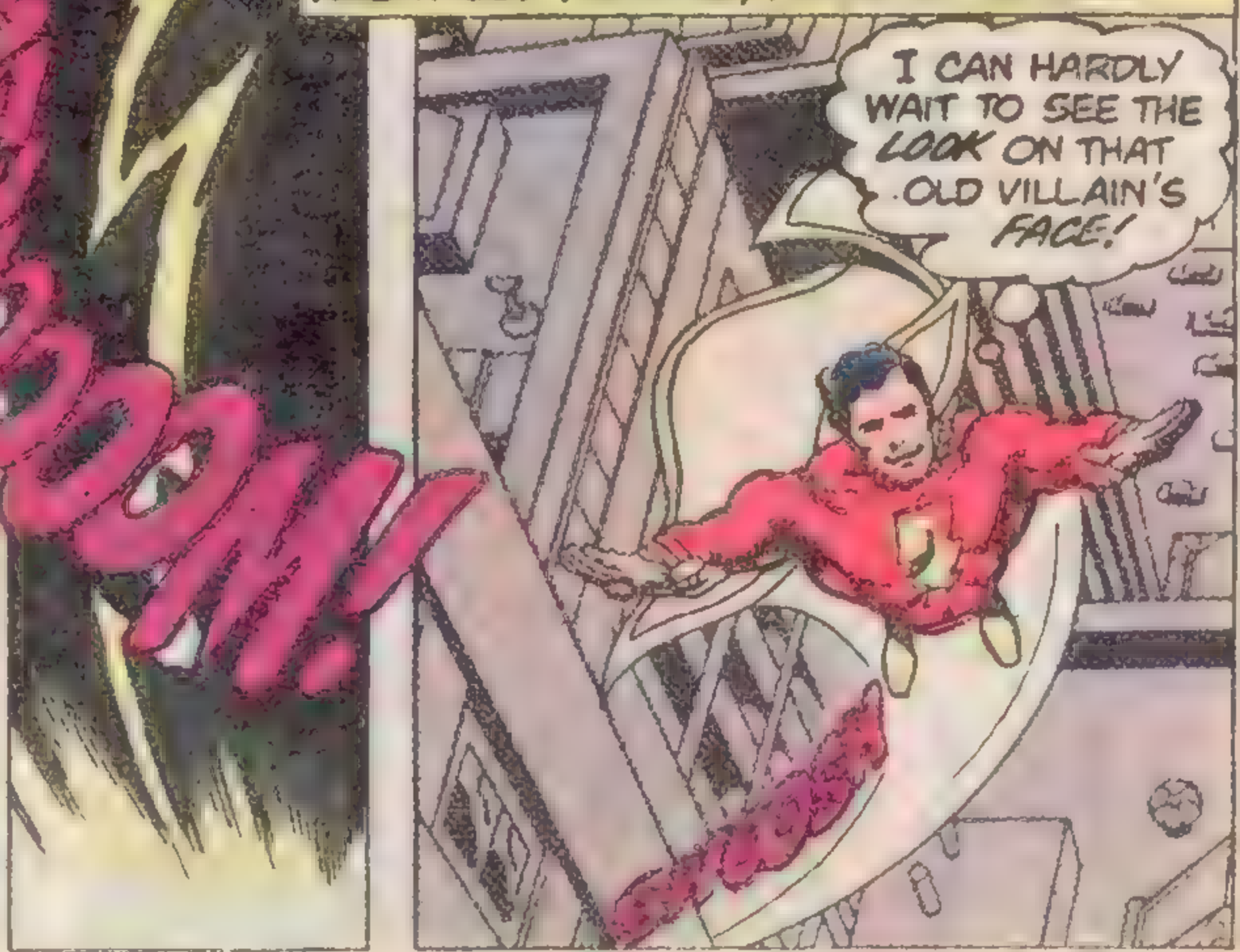
NOW...

SHAZAM!



BUT EVEN AS BILLY, CHANGED ONCE MORE BY THE MAGIC LIGHTNING INTO THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL, TAKES TO THE SKY...

I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO SEE THE LOOK ON THAT OLD VILLAIN'S FACE!



... HIS SECRETARY, JOAN JAMESON, CATCHES EVERY SOUND...

THE THUNDER MEANS BILLY'S BECOME CAPTAIN MARVEL-- AND THE SOUND OF HIM FLYING AWAY...

... MEANS HE IS NOW OFFICIALLY OUT!

AT THIS MOMENT, THE OUTER DOOR OPENS...

UH-OH! THE DOOR!

I'M SORRY-- BOTH MR. BATSON AND CAPTAIN MARVEL ARE OUT!

I DIDN'T COME TO SEE THEM, JOAN!

WHA---? THAT VOICE...

...YOU!

SORRY WE CAN'T STICK AROUND TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MISS JAMESON'S MYSTERIOUS VISITOR, BUT CAP HAS JUST ARRIVED AT SIVANA'S CELL...

... AND I JUST COULDN'T RESIST COMING HERE TO TELL YOU!

NO! THE NOBELS ARE GIVEN FOR HELPING HUMANKIND! I'VE ALWAYS DONE JUST THE OPPOSITE!

OH, COME NOW! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR DEATH-RAY THAT KILLS ONLY RATS?

OR YOUR MACHINE FOR KEEPING WHOLE CITIES POLLUTION-FREE?

OR YOUR PROCESS FOR MAKING NUTRITIOUS FOOD FROM ROCKS?

DON'T REMIND ME!



MY GOOD INVENTIONS--
THINGS I COULDN'T
USE FOR CRIME!

I HID THEM AWAY--
BUT YOU FOUND
THEM AND GAVE
THEM TO THE
WORLD!

GUILTY AS
CHARGED, SIVANA!
BUT YOU SHOULD
THANK ME!



AS A YOUNG MAN, YOU WERE
SOURCED ON HUMANITY
BECAUSE OTHER SCIENTISTS
REJECTED YOUR IDEAS!

SO YOU TURNED TO CRIME--
BUT NOW YOU'VE BEEN HONORED
FOR YOUR GOOD DISCOVERIES!
YOU CAN REFORM!

NOT ON
YOUR
LIFE!



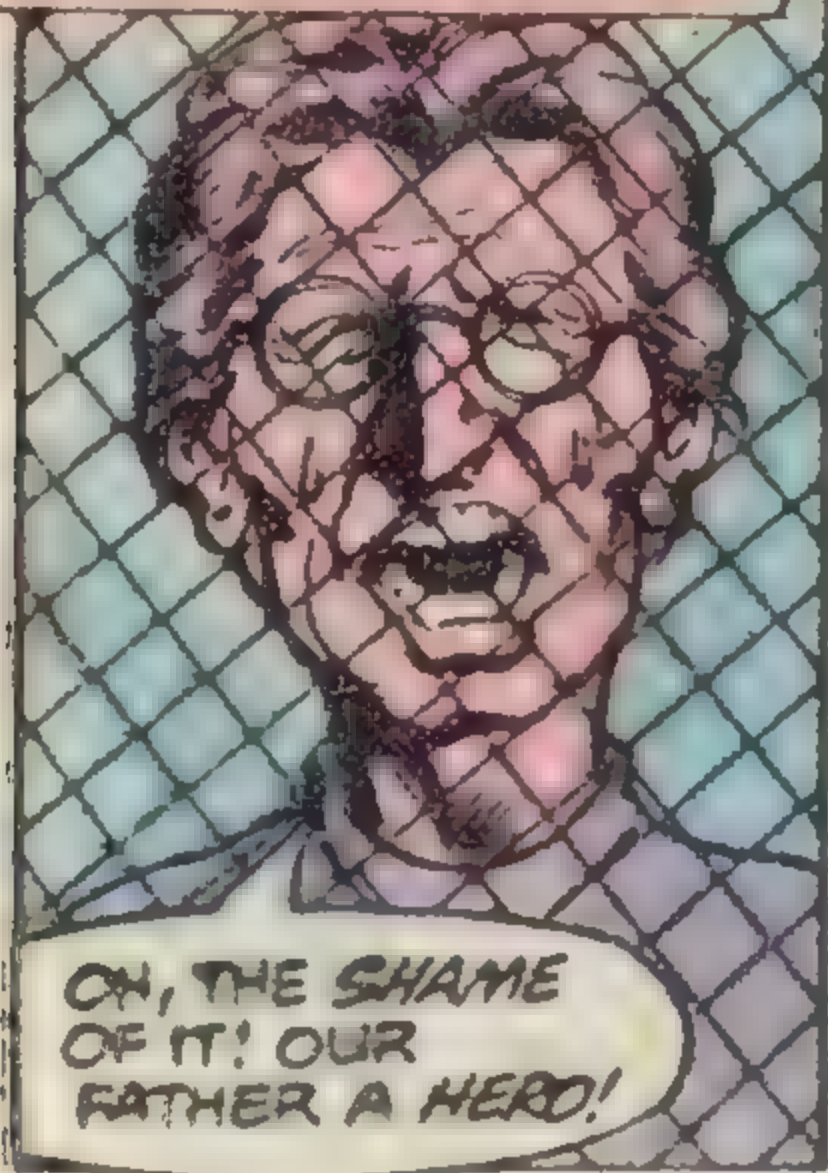
BAH! A MEASLY NOBEL IS
NO HONOR FOR ME! WHEN
I'M ACKNOWLEDGED AS
RIGHTFUL RULER OF THE
UNIVERSE, I'LL CONSIDER
MYSELF PROPERLY
HONORED!



I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT
WAY. BUT I'LL BE HERE IN A
FEW DAYS TO TAKE YOU TO
STOCKHOLM, WHERE YOU'LL
RECEIVE YOUR AWARD!

CURSES! I CAN'T
TAKE THIS LYING
DOWN!

SIVANA'S REACTION IS ECHOED BY HIS YOUNGER
CHILDREN, SIVANA JR. AND GEORGIA, IN THEIR
REFORMATORY CELLS...



OH, THE SHAME
OF IT! OUR
FATHER A HERO!



HOW CAN
I FACE MY
CRIMINAL
FRIENDS
AFTER THIS?

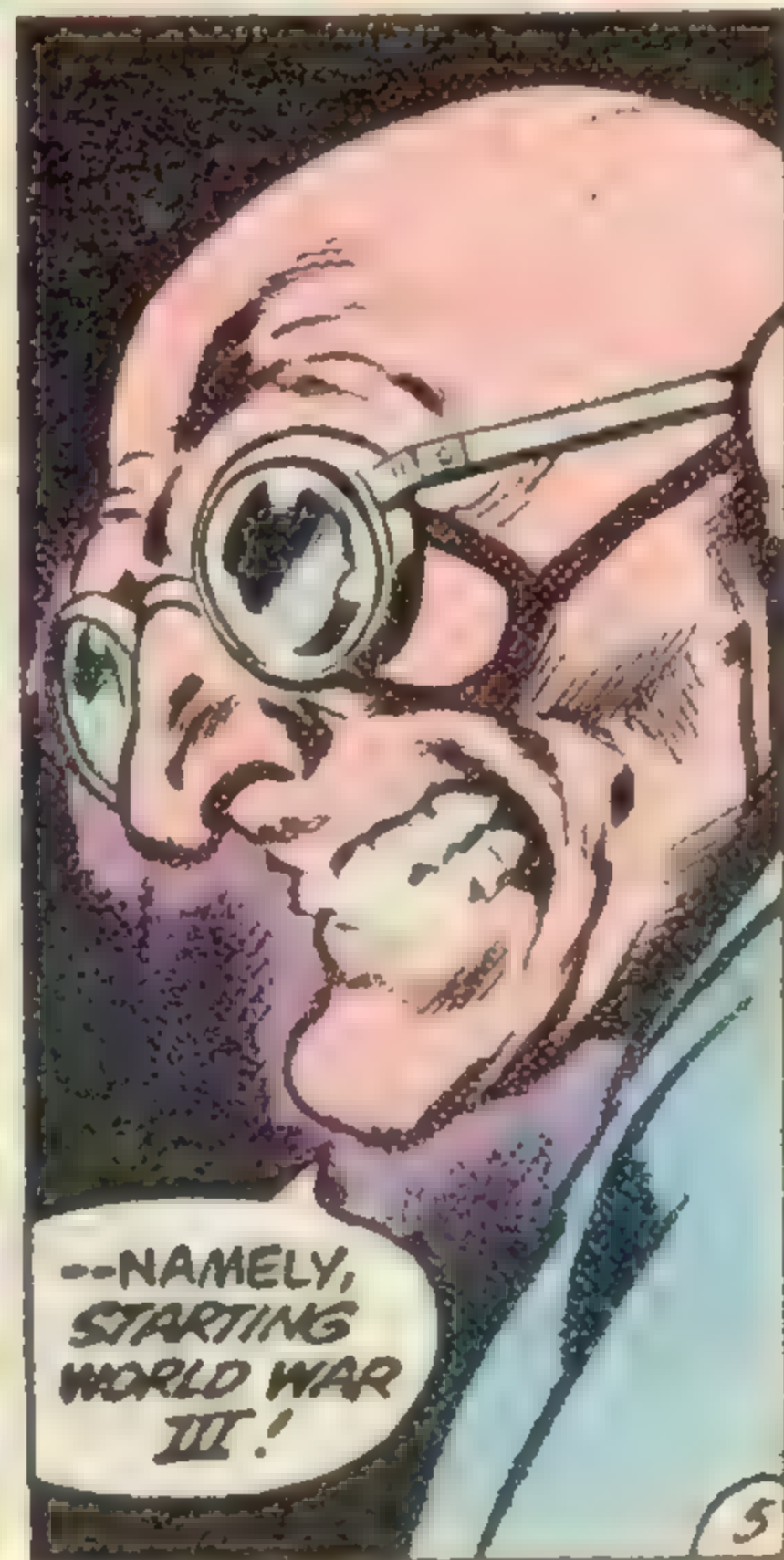
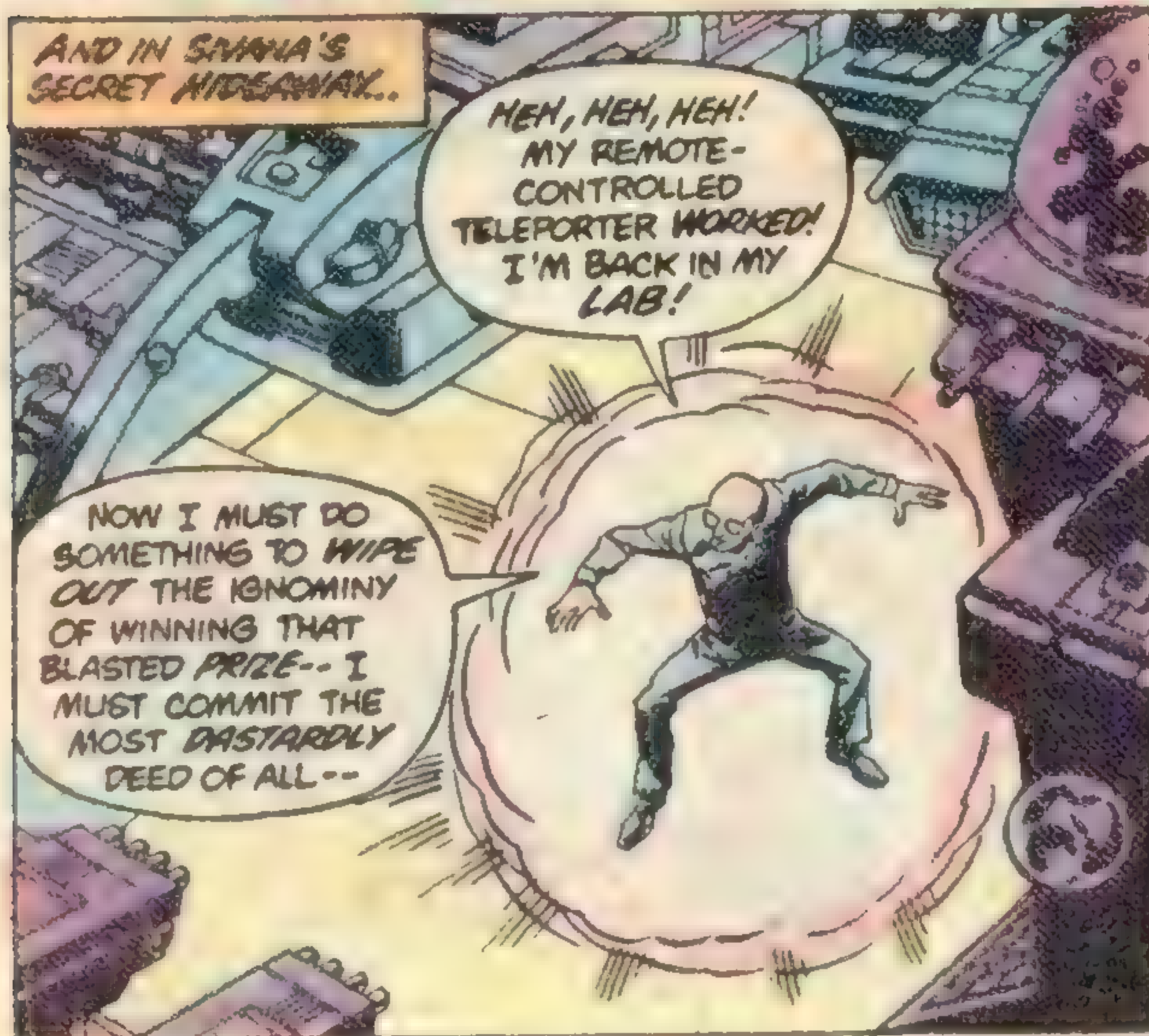
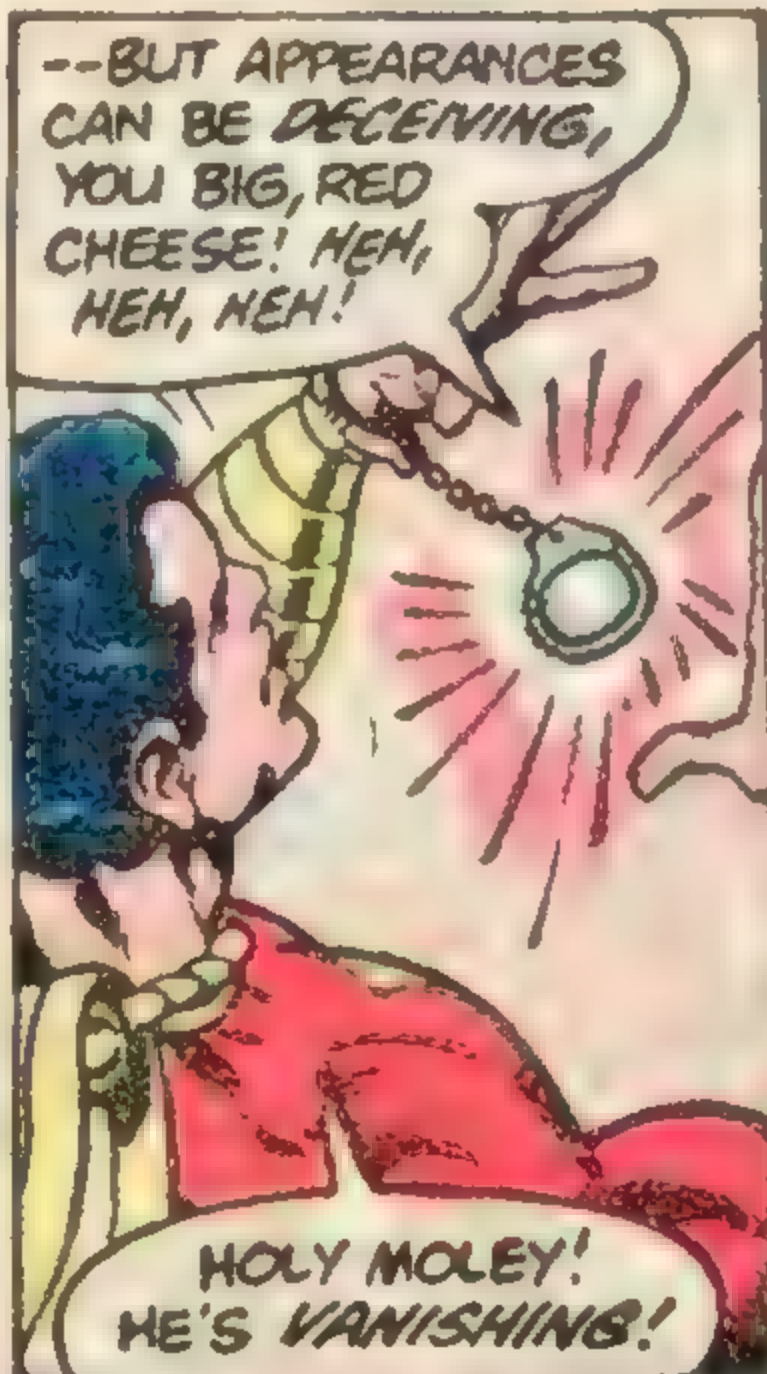
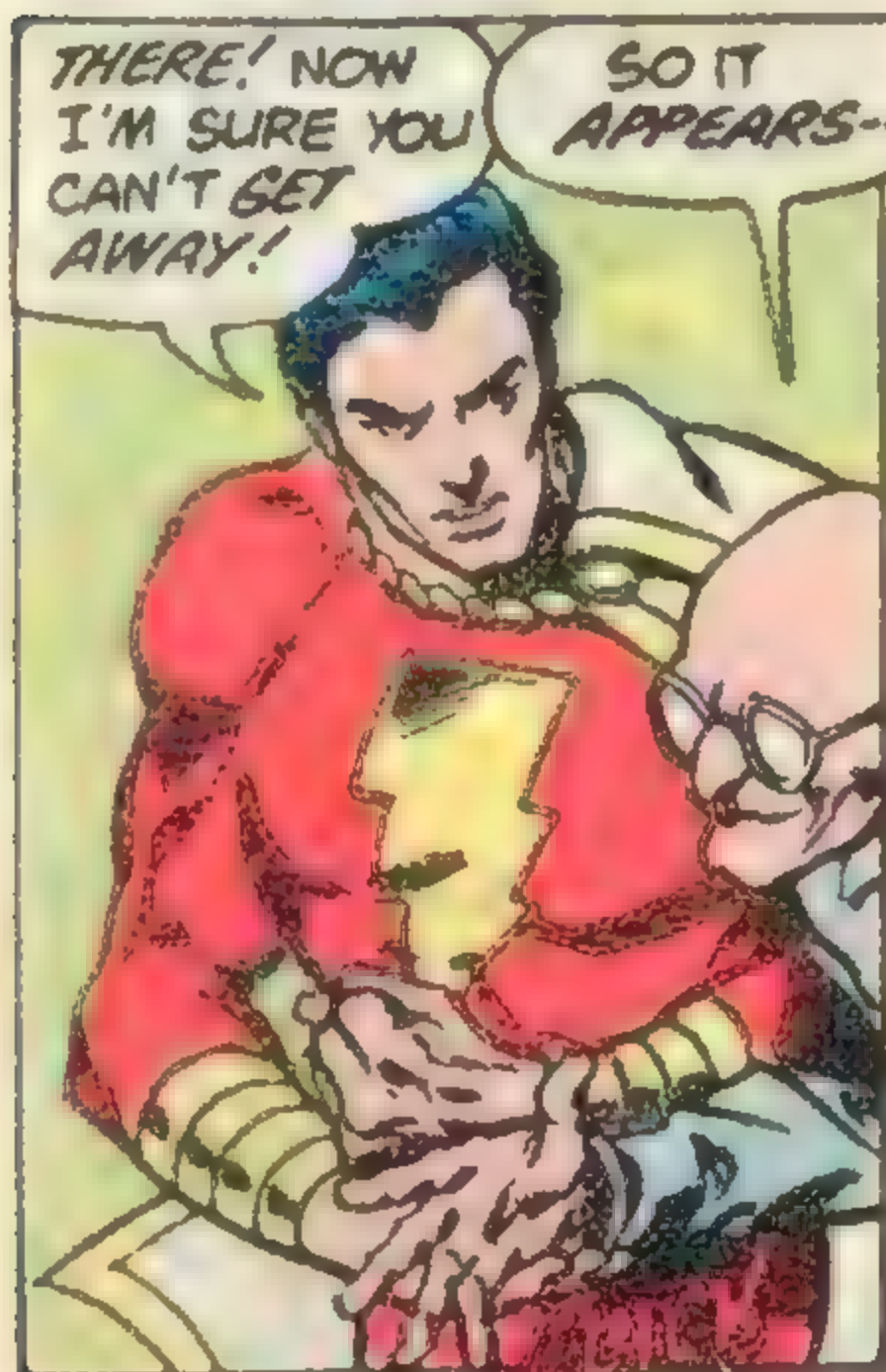
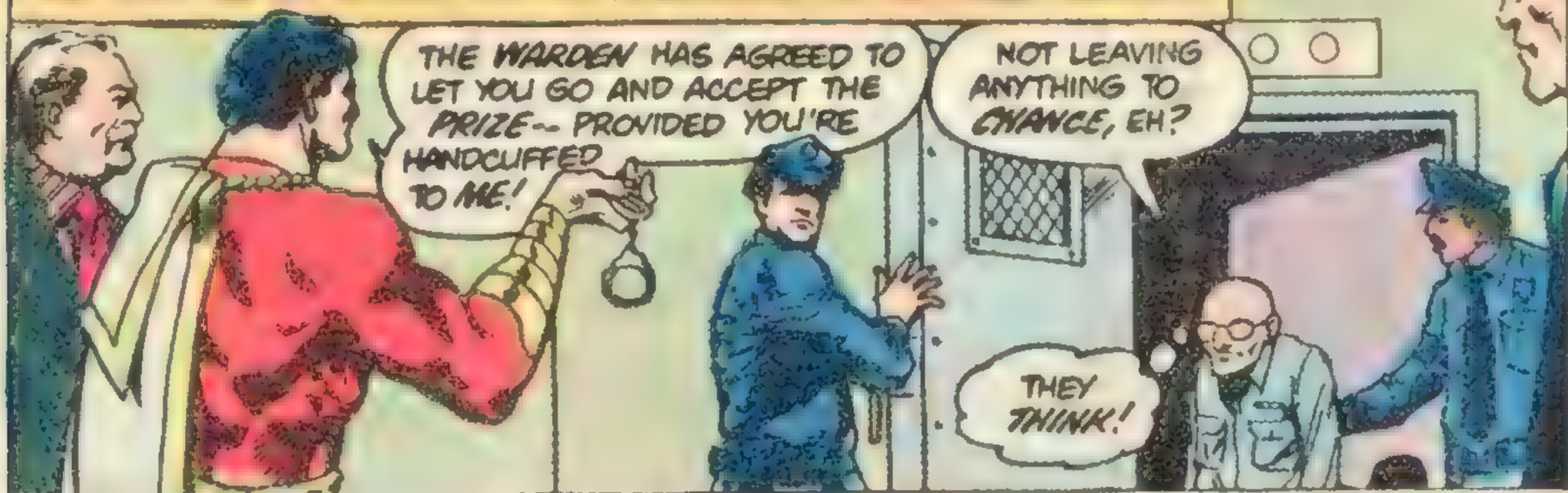


NOT SO, HOWEVER, WITH HIS OLDER
OFFSPRING, BEAUTIA AND MAGNI-
FICUS...

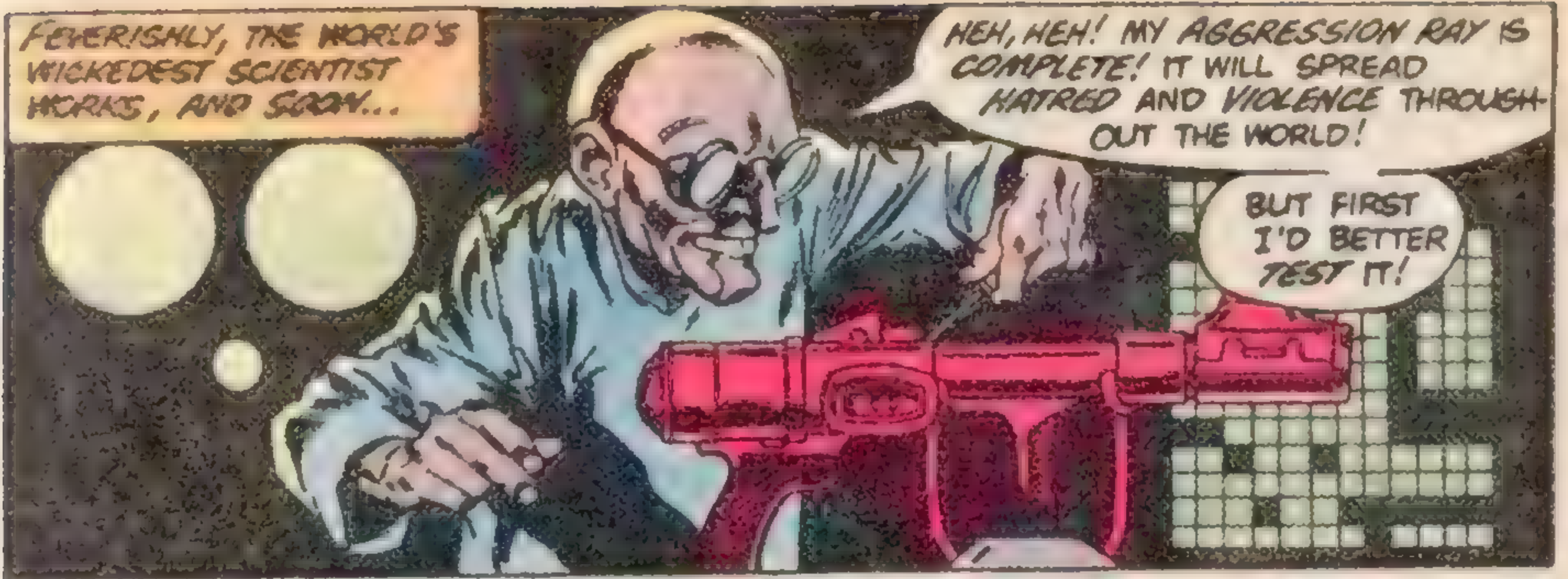
HOW
WONDERFUL NOT
TO HAVE TO BE
ASHAMED OF
FATHER!

YES, SIS! IF
ONLY HE'LL
TURN OVER
A NEW
LEAF
NOW!

AND WHEN THE DAY COMES FOR THE AWARDOING OF THE NOBEL PRIZES...



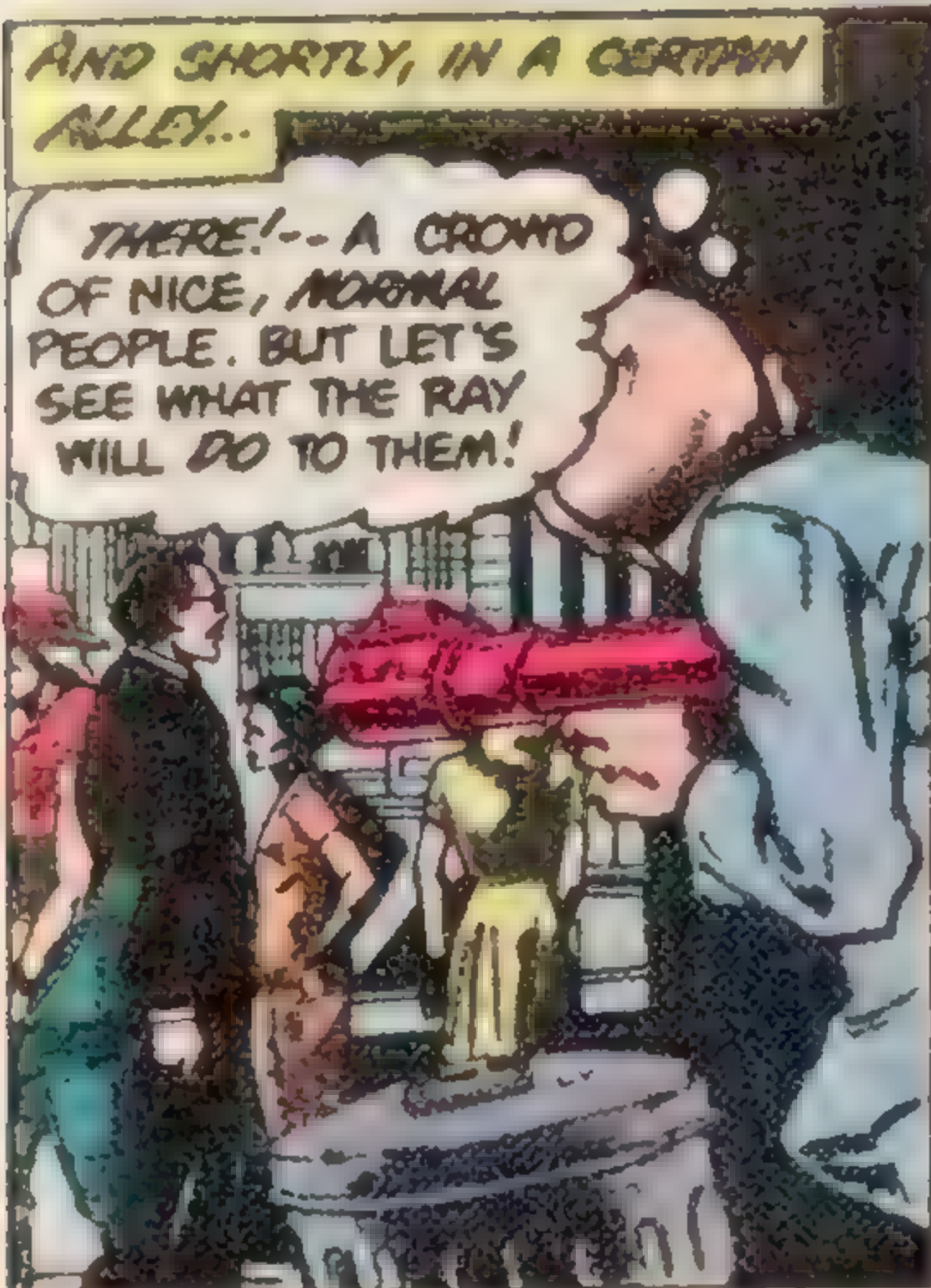
FEVERISHLY, THE WORLD'S
WICKEDEST SCIENTIST
WORKS, AND SOON...



HEH, HEH! MY AGGRESSION RAY IS
COMPLETE! IT WILL SPREAD
HATRED AND VIOLENCE THROUGH
OUT THE WORLD!

BUT FIRST
I'D BETTER
TEST IT!

AND SHORTLY, IN A CERTAIN
ALLEY...

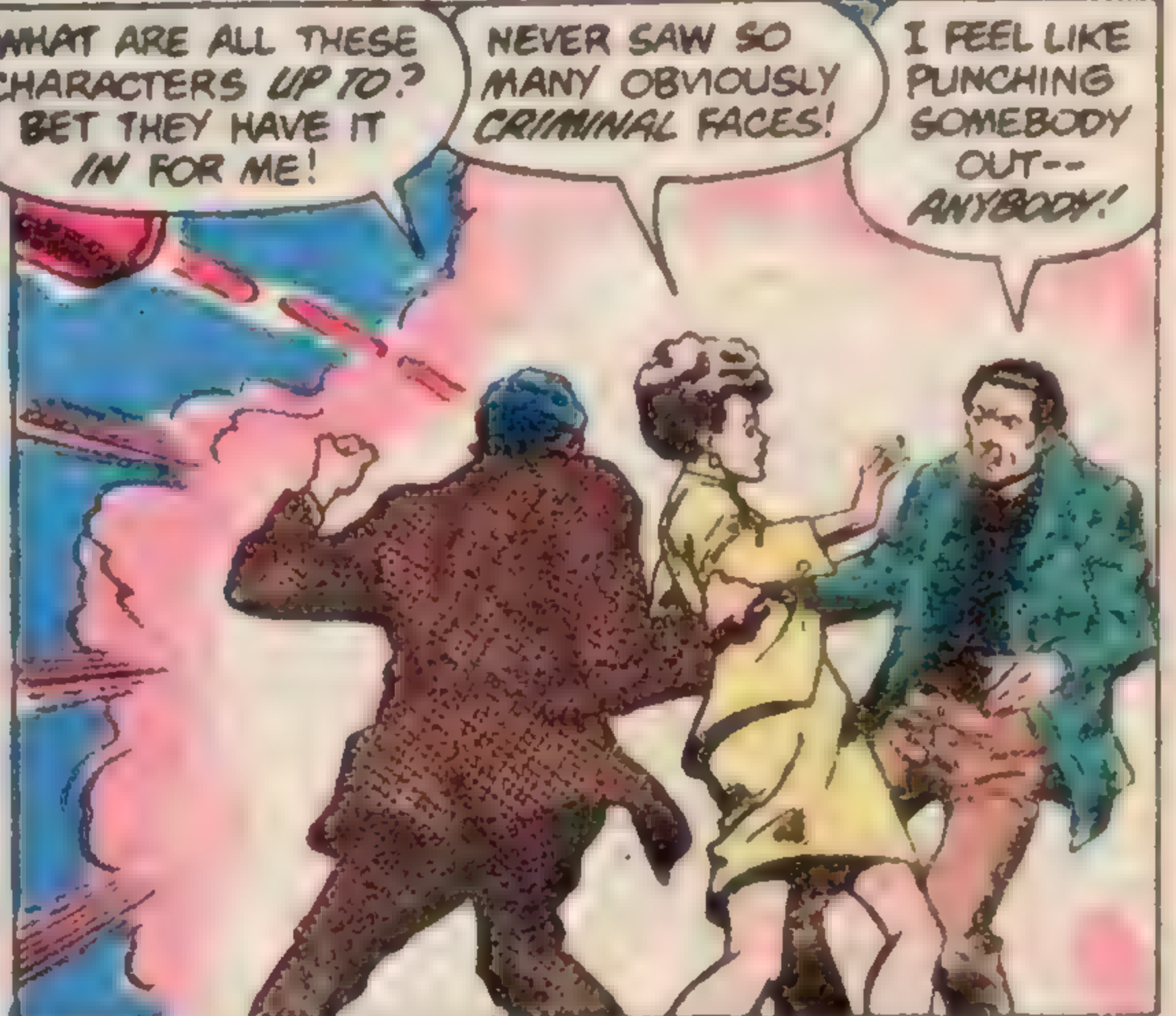


THERE!-- A CROWD
OF NICE, NORMAL
PEOPLE. BUT LET'S
SEE WHAT THE RAY
WILL DO TO THEM!

WHAT ARE ALL THESE
CHARACTERS UP TO?
BET THEY HAVE IT
IN FOR ME!

NEVER SAW SO
MANY OBVIOUSLY
CRIMINAL FACES!

I FEEL LIKE
PUNCHING
SOMEBODY
OUT--
ANYBODY!



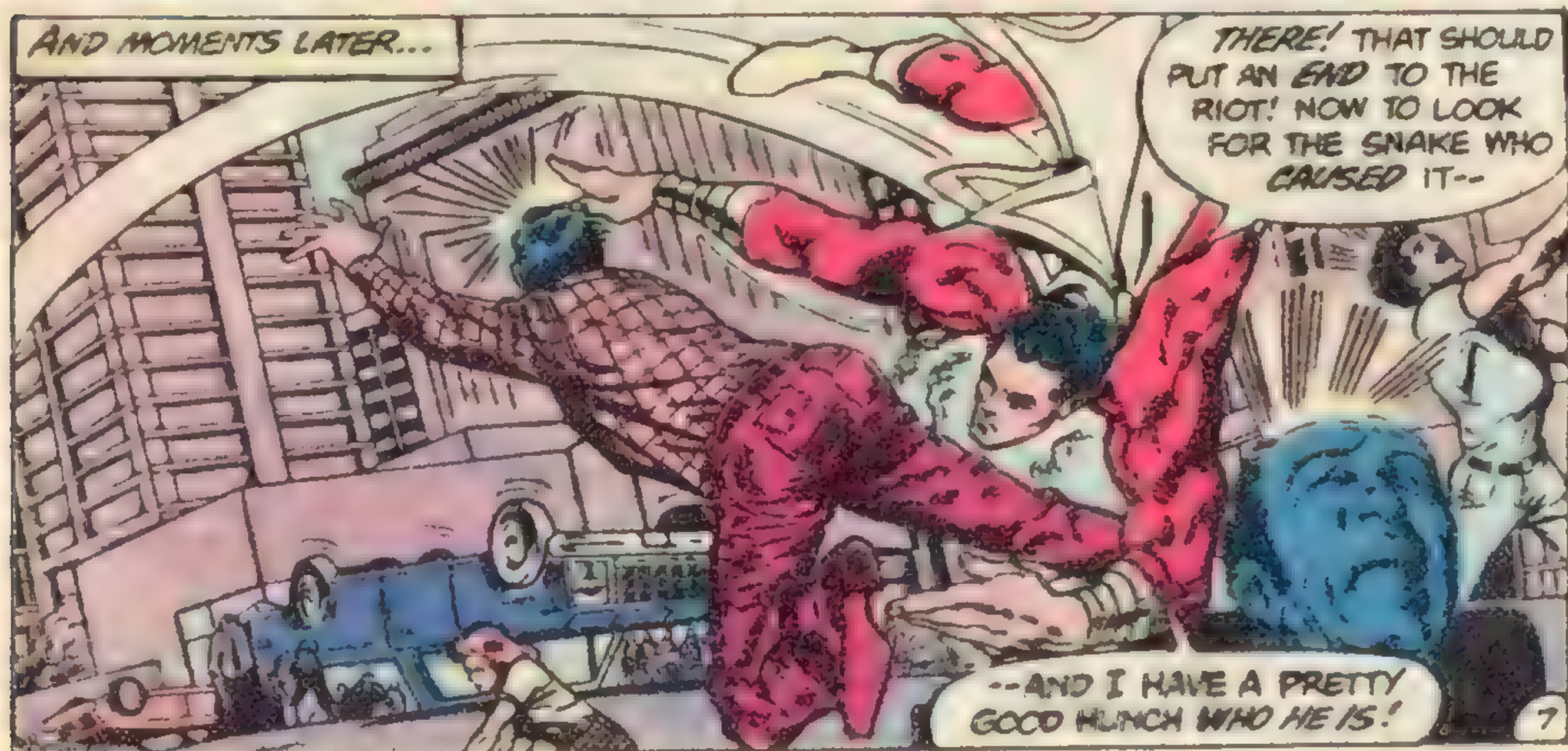
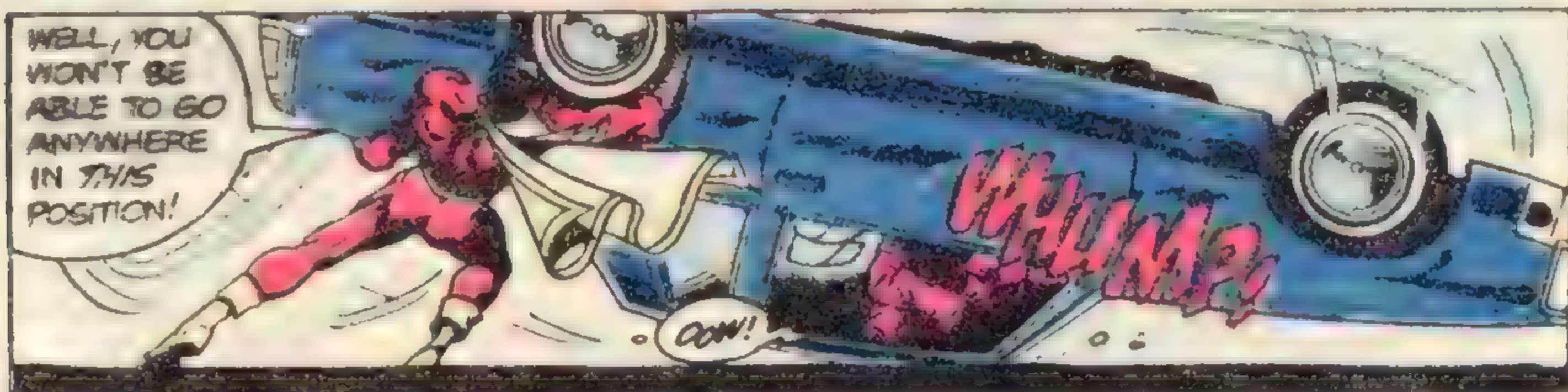
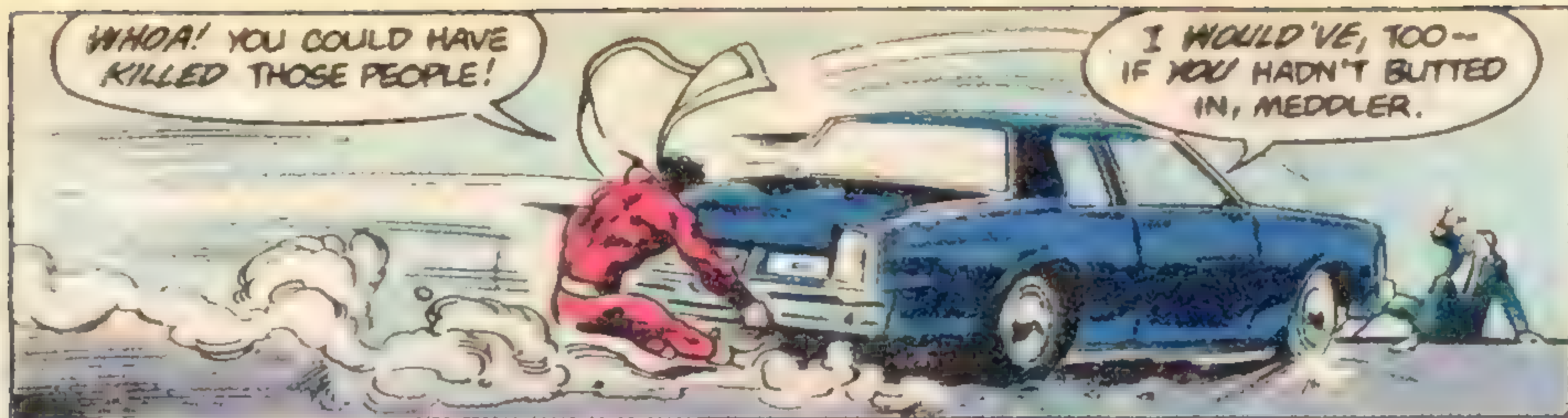
TRYIN' TO
START
TROUBLE,
EH? I'M
ON TO
YOU!

I'LL AWM
YOUR UGLY
FACE RIGHT
DOWN YOUR
THROAT!

HA! I'LL FLATTEN
THOSE CREEPS!

HOLY MOLEY!
WHAT'S GOING
ON HERE?





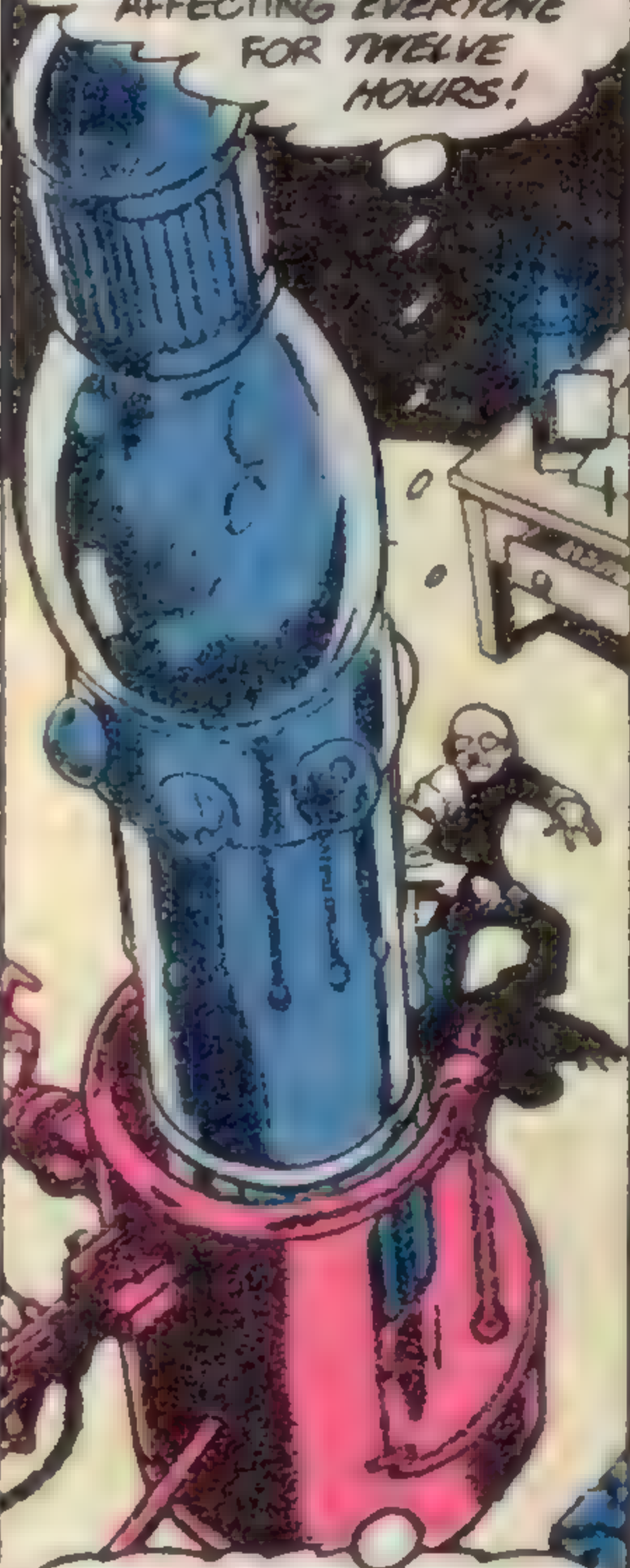
BUT THE OBJECT OF CAPTAIN MARVEL'S SEARCH IS ALREADY BEATING A HASTY RETREAT...

MY RAY WORKS-- BUT I CAN SEE THE PEOPLE ARE ALREADY STARTING TO REGAIN THEIR SENSES! HAVE TO BEEF UP MY NEXT MODEL!



AND SOON, BACK IN SIVANA'S LAB...

WITH THE BATTERIES WORKING AT FULL POWER, I CAN SEND THIS SATELLITE AROUND THE WORLD ONCE, AFFECTING EVERYONE FOR TWELVE HOURS!



THAT'LL BE ENOUGH TIME FOR THEM TO START A NUCLEAR WAR SO DESTRUCTIVE NO NATION WILL SURVIVE! THEN I'LL TAKE OVER!

READY FOR LAUNCH!

THE ROCKET WILL DESTROY THE HOUSE ABOVE ME, BUT IT'S ABANDONED--

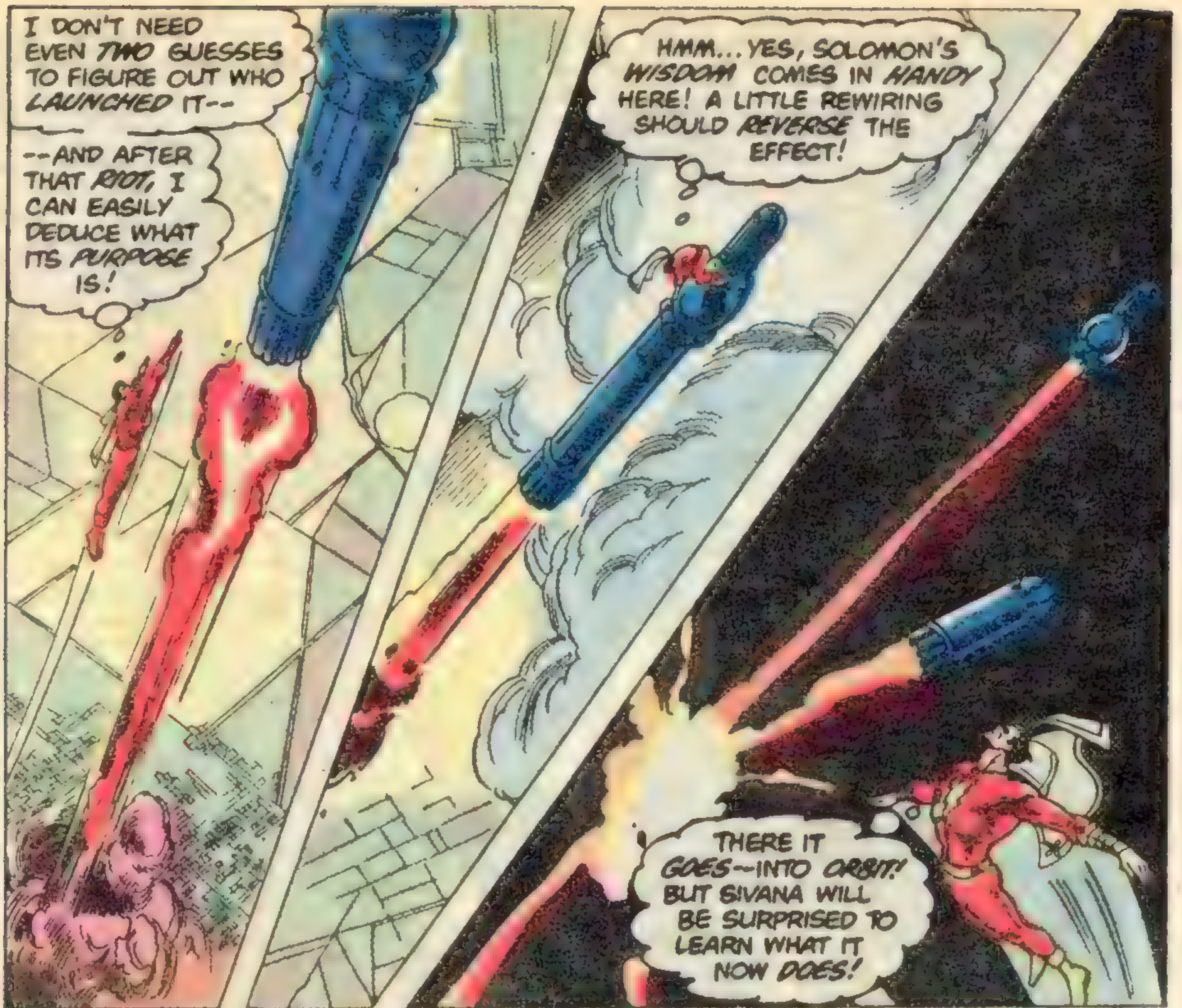


NOT THAT IT WOULD MATTER IF IT WEREN'T!

AND AS THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL CONTINUES TO SEEK HIS ESCAPED FOE...

HOLY MOLEY! THAT CONDEMNED BROWNSTONE BEING DEMOLISHED BY A SPACE-ROCKET!





I DON'T NEED
EVEN TWO GUESSES
TO FIGURE OUT WHO
LAUNCHED IT--

--AND AFTER
THAT RIOT, I
CAN EASILY
DEDUCE WHAT
ITS PURPOSE
IS!

HMM... YES, SOLOMON'S
WISDOM COMES IN HANDY
HERE! A LITTLE REWIRING
SHOULD REVERSE THE
EFFECT!

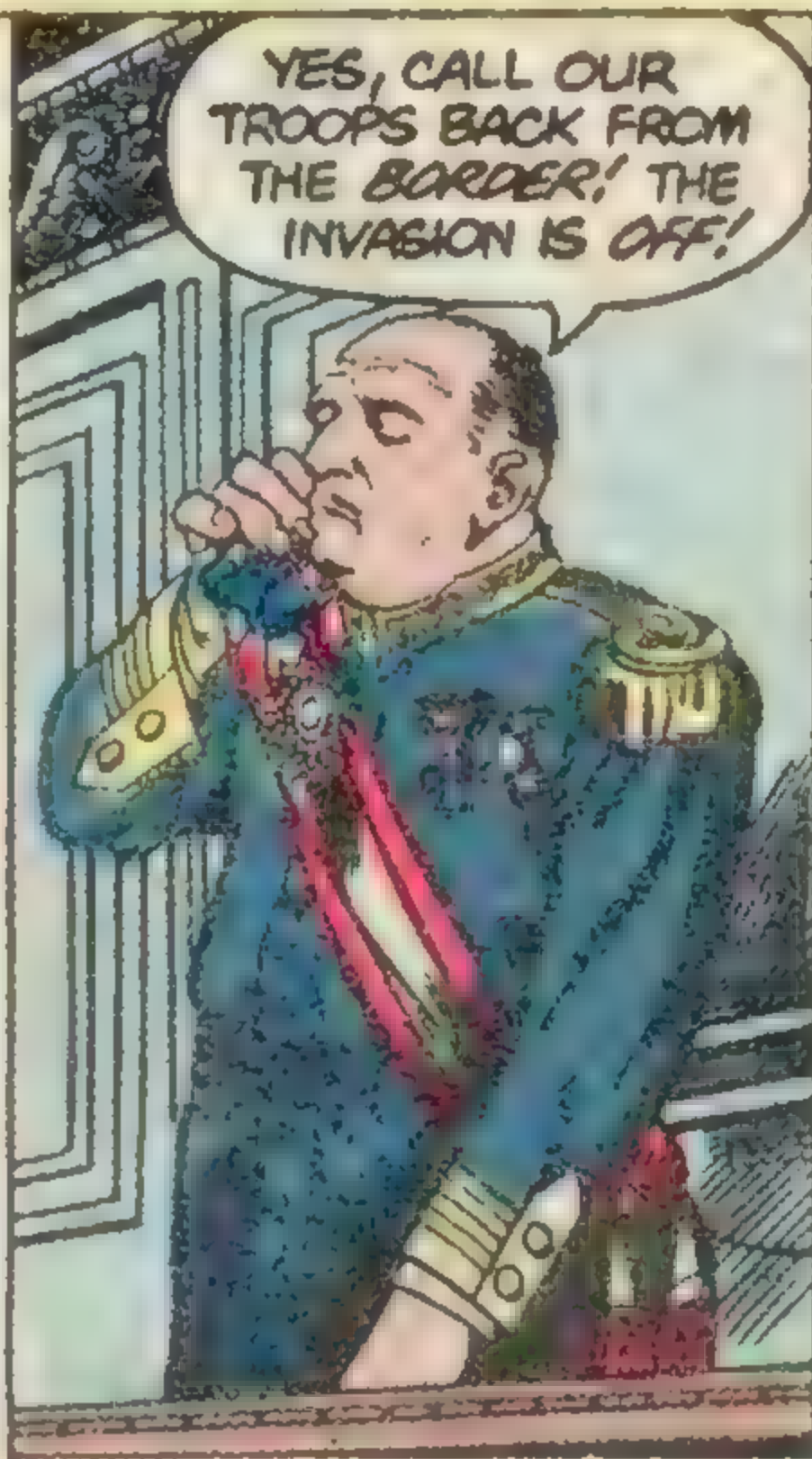
THERE IT
GOES--INTO ORBIT!
BUT SIVANA WILL
BE SURPRISED TO
LEARN WHAT IT
NOW DOES!

AND AS THE RAYS FROM THE SATELLITE BEAM DOWN ON EARTH..

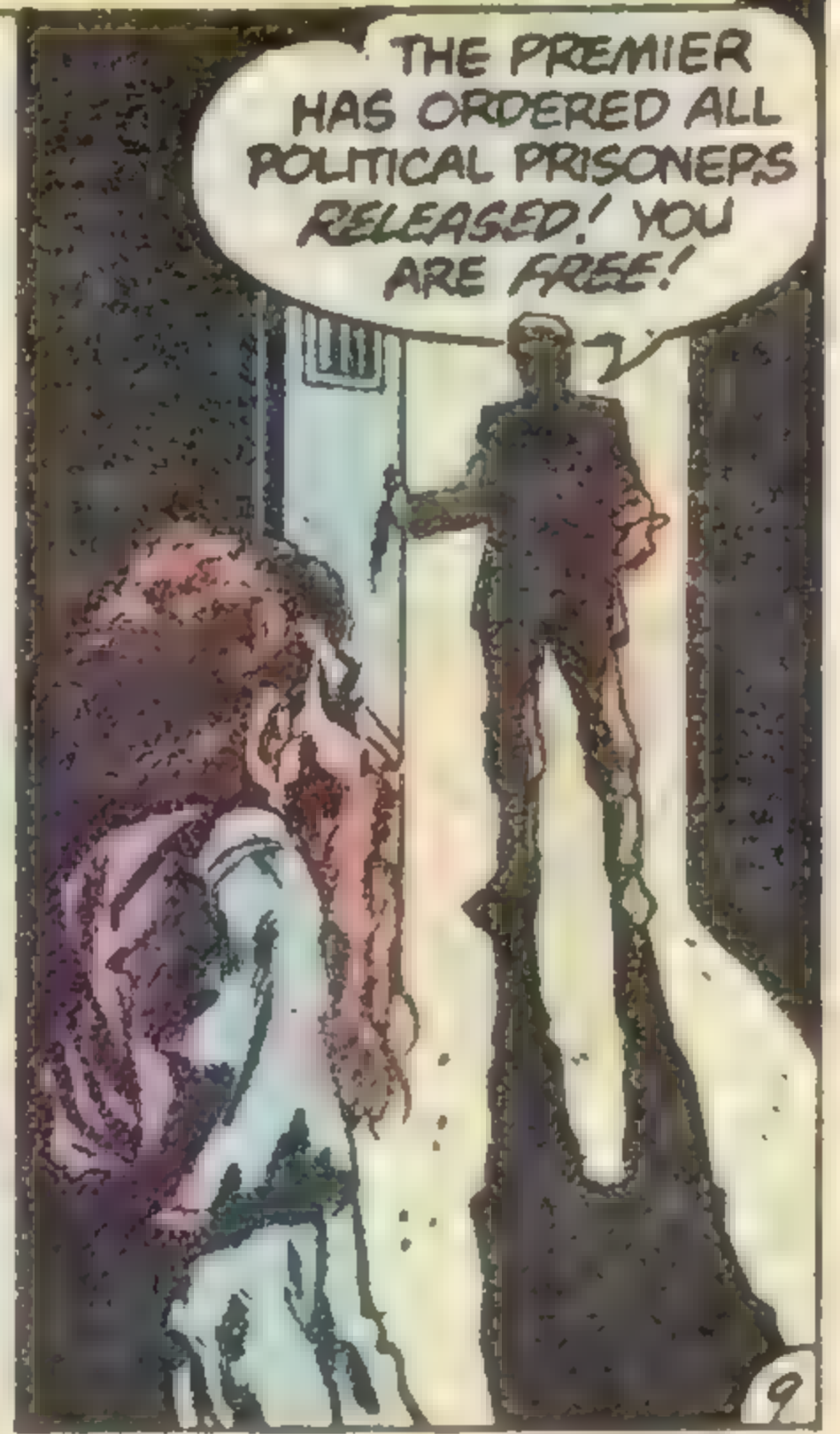


WE GIVE UP! IT
WAS WRONG TO TRY
TO OVERTHROW
THE GOVERNMENT!

AMAZING!
THE TERRORISTS
ARE SURREN-
DERING!



YES, CALL OUR
TROOPS BACK FROM
THE BORDER! THE
INVASION IS OFF!



THE PREMIER
HAS ORDERED ALL
POLITICAL PRISONERS
RELEASED! YOU
ARE FREE!

WHEN CAPTAIN MARVEL ZOOMS DOWN TO THE ROCKET'S LAUNCH-PAD...

I WANT TO RECEIVE MY NOBEL. THEN YOU CAN TAKE ME BACK TO PRISON!

OF COURSE-- YOU'VE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE RAYS, TOO!

GLAD TO SEE YOU!

YOU'RE WHAT?

I'M READY TO GO GET MY PRIZE NOW!

OH, HOW HAPPY I AM TO BE RECEIVING RECOGNITION FOR MY GOOD INVENTIONS!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY!

AND LATER, AFTER THE RAYS HAVE WORN OFF, AND ALL IS BACK TO NORMAL...

CURSES! I ACTUALLY ACCEPTED THE NOBEL PRIZE!

NOT ONLY THAT, YOUR SATELLITE GAVE THE WORLD TWELVE HOURS OF SOLID PEACE--

--DURING WHICH TIME FOUR WARS WERE ENDED AND TWO MORE PREVENTED!

AS A RESULT, YOU'VE BEEN NOMINATED FOR NEXT YEAR'S NOBEL PEACE PRIZE!

THE PEACE PRIZE! YAAAAHH! I'LL NEVER LIVE THIS DOWN!

ME AN' EASY'D LOST TRACK OF HOW MANY TIMES THE ENEMY CAME ON.' WE KEPT FIRIN'...TILL OUR FINGERS STIFFENED ON OUR TRIGGERS...

OUR EYES GOT BLEARY... FIRIN' THROUGH THE ACID SMOKE...

BUT-- THE ENEMY COULDN'T BE STOPPED!...

HERE THEY COME AGAIN!

HOLD 'EM!



SGT ROCK AND EASY CO

CREATED & WRITTEN BY: BOB KANIGHER
 ART BY: FRANK REDONDO
 EDITED BY: JOE KLUBERT
 COLORING BY: BOB LE ROSE

The DUMMY

EASY WALKED AWAY FROM THE FIGHT... BLEEDIN' AND ACHIN' FROM EVERY PORE!

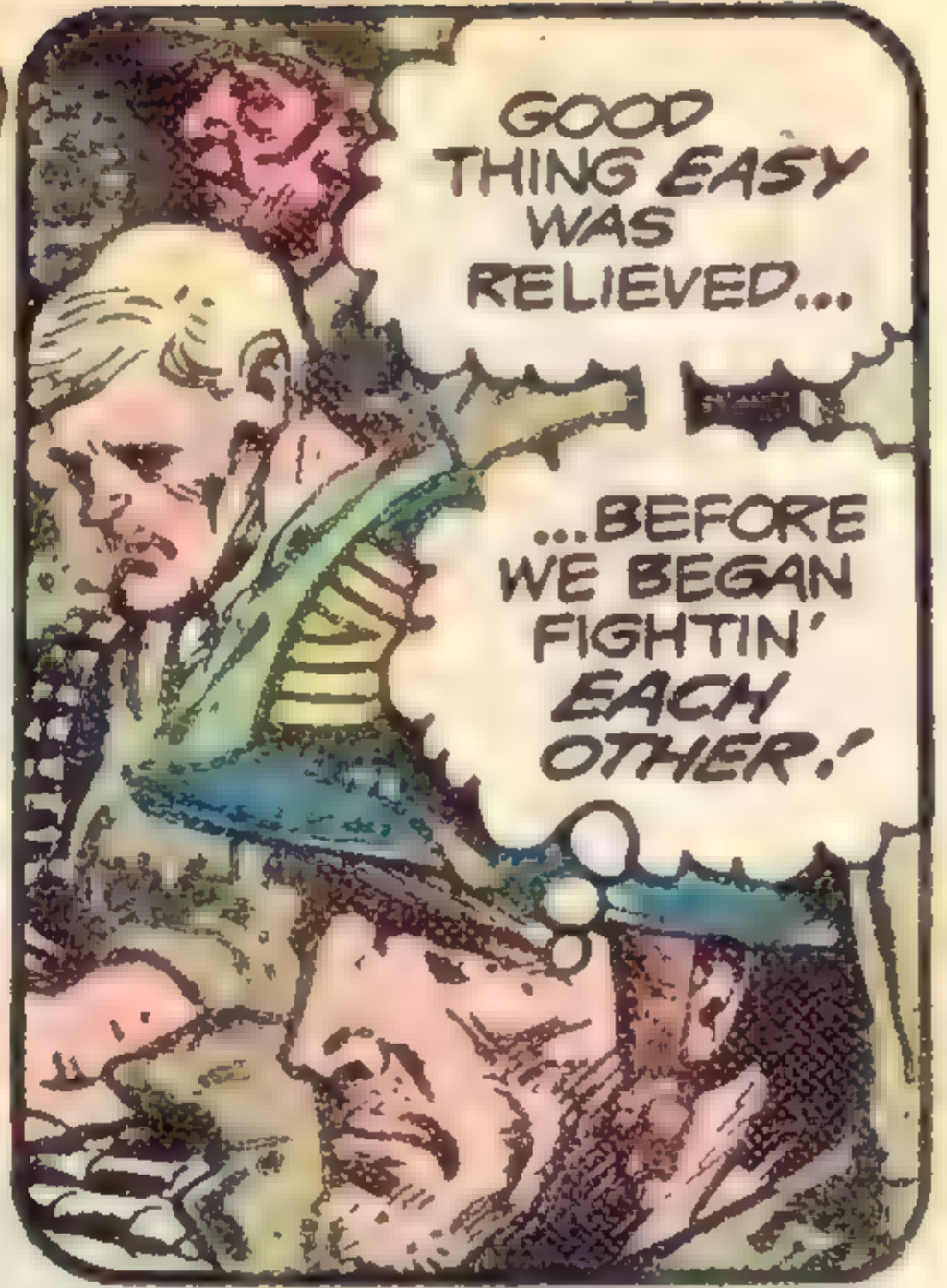


THEN... A TRUCK CAME TO CARRY EASY BACK TO R&R...



GOOD THING EASY WAS RELIEVED...

...BEFORE WE BEGAN FIGHTIN' EACH OTHER!

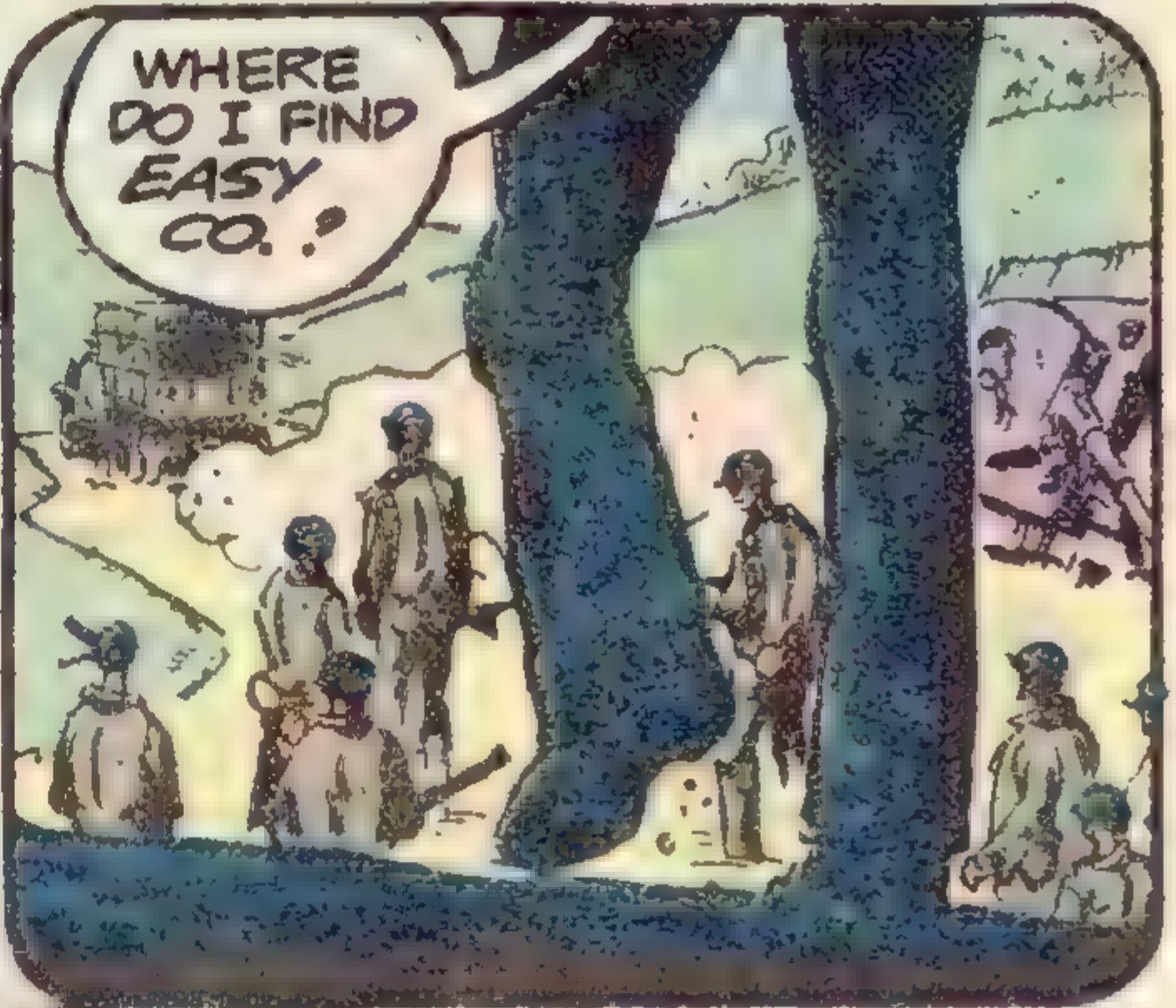


SORRY, ROCK... YOU AND YOUR GUYS GOTTA GO BACK!

THE ENEMY'S MOUNTIN' ANOTHER COUNTERATTACK!



WHERE DO I FIND EASY CO.?



YEAH... IT WAS A BAD TIME FOR EASY'S NEW REPLACEMENT TO JOIN US!

HEY!... THIS CAN'T BE EASY!

YOU GUYS LOOK MORE TIRED THAN THE 4-F'S BACK HOME!





I GOTTA ADMIT I WAS KINDA SURPRISED AT EASY'S REACTION...

HEY, WILD MAN... WE GOT A REAL REPLACEMENT THIS TIME!

YEAH...HE'LL BE O.K.-- AS LONG AS WE DON'T GET SPLINTER'S!

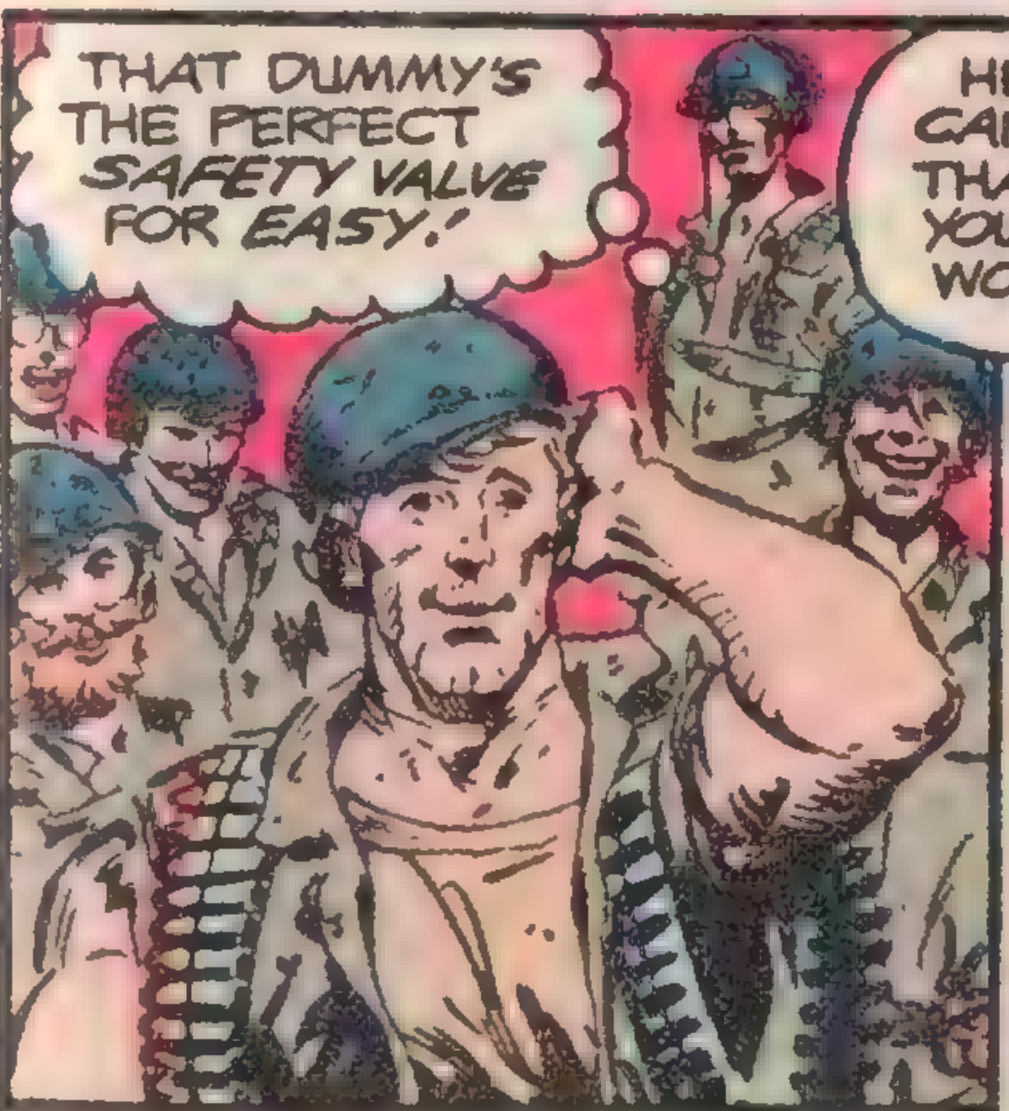
A WOODEN G.I.!



WHAT'S A NICE DUMMY LIKE YOU DOIN' IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?



DUMMY? LOOK WHO'S CALLIN' WHO A DUMMY!

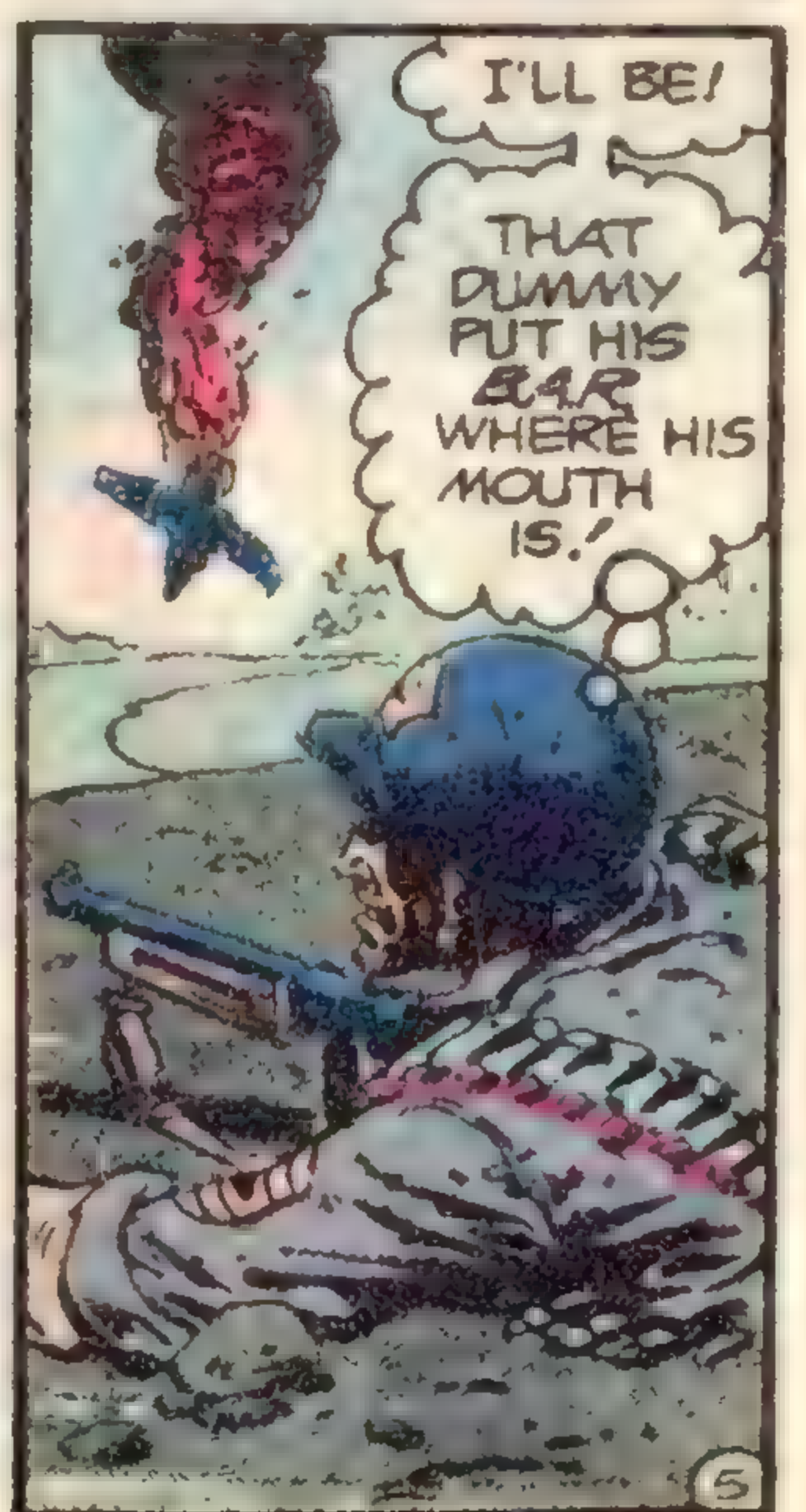
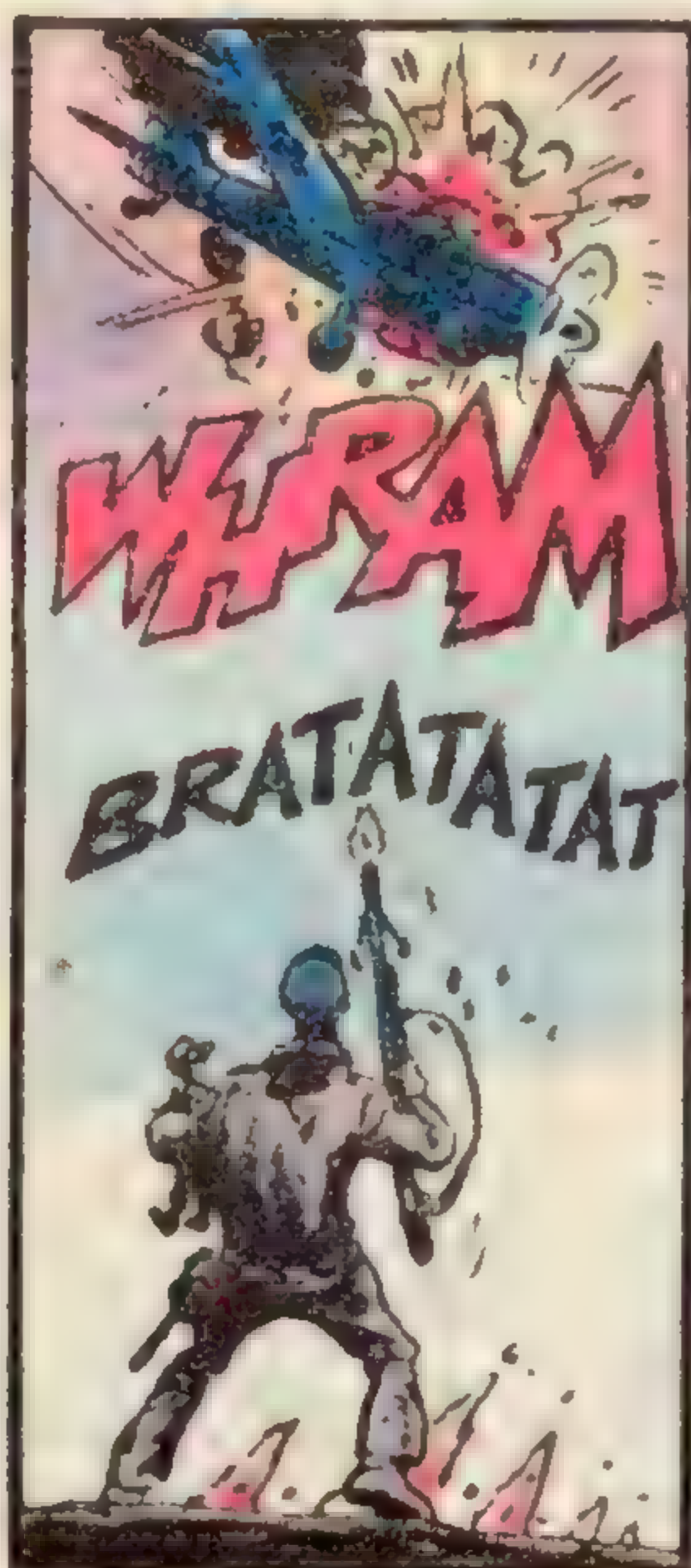


THAT DUMMY'S THE PERFECT SAFETY VALVE FOR EASY!

HEY, SOLDIER... CAN YOU HANDLE THAT B.A.R.--LIKE YOU DO YOUR WOODEN FRIEND?

SURE HE CAN, SARGE!

ANYWAY... FROM THE LOOKS OF IT... HE WON'T DO MUCH WORSE THAN THE GUYS YOU GOT BEHIND YOU NOW!



THE DUMMY DIDN'T STOP AT POKIN' FUN AT EASY... HE STARTED TALKIN' TO THE KID HOLDIN' HIM -- LIKE THEY WERE TWO SEPARATE PEOPLE.'

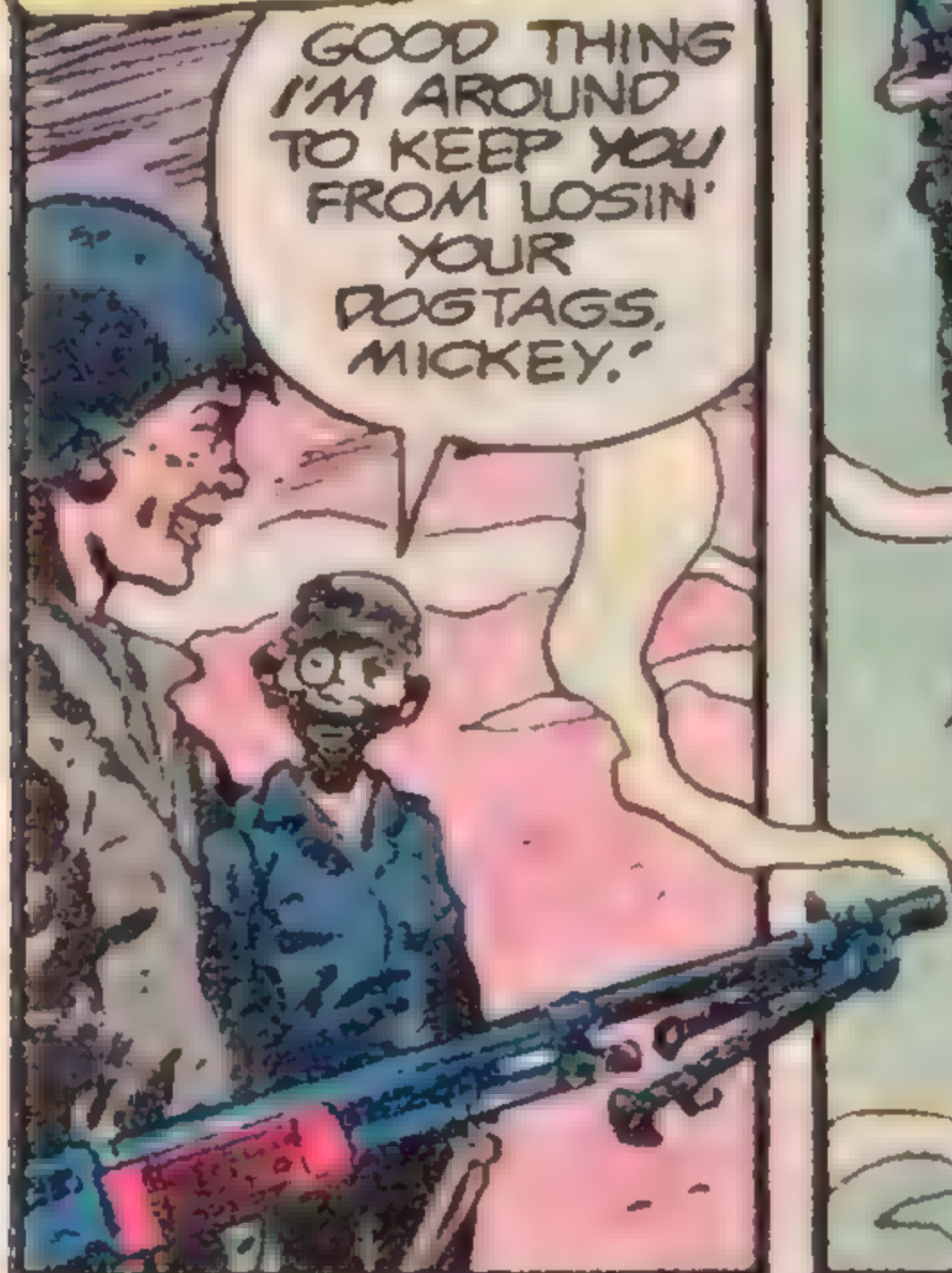
GOOD THING I'M AROUND TO KEEP YOU FROM LOSIN' YOUR DOGTAGS, MICKEY.'

YOU WERE GREAT, LITTLE BUDDY.' NICE SHOOTIN'!

TAGGIN' THAT KRAUT'LL GET YOU A MEDAL FOR SURE!

HMPH.' I DID ALL THE WORK... AN' THIS DUMMY HERE'LL BE DECORATED.'

THERE JUST AIN'T NO JUSTICE.'



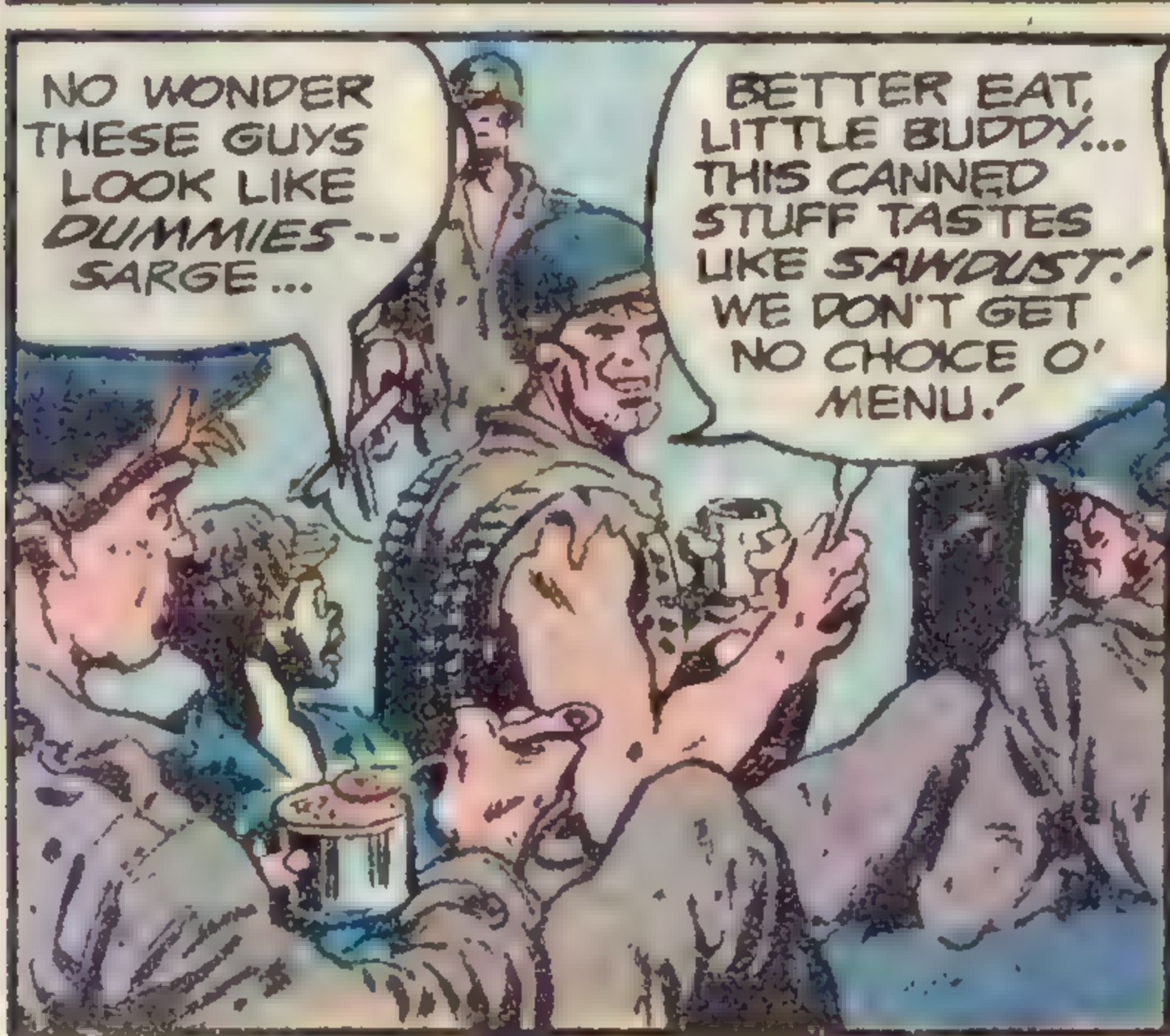
SHOW'S OVER, EASY... MOVE OUT.'

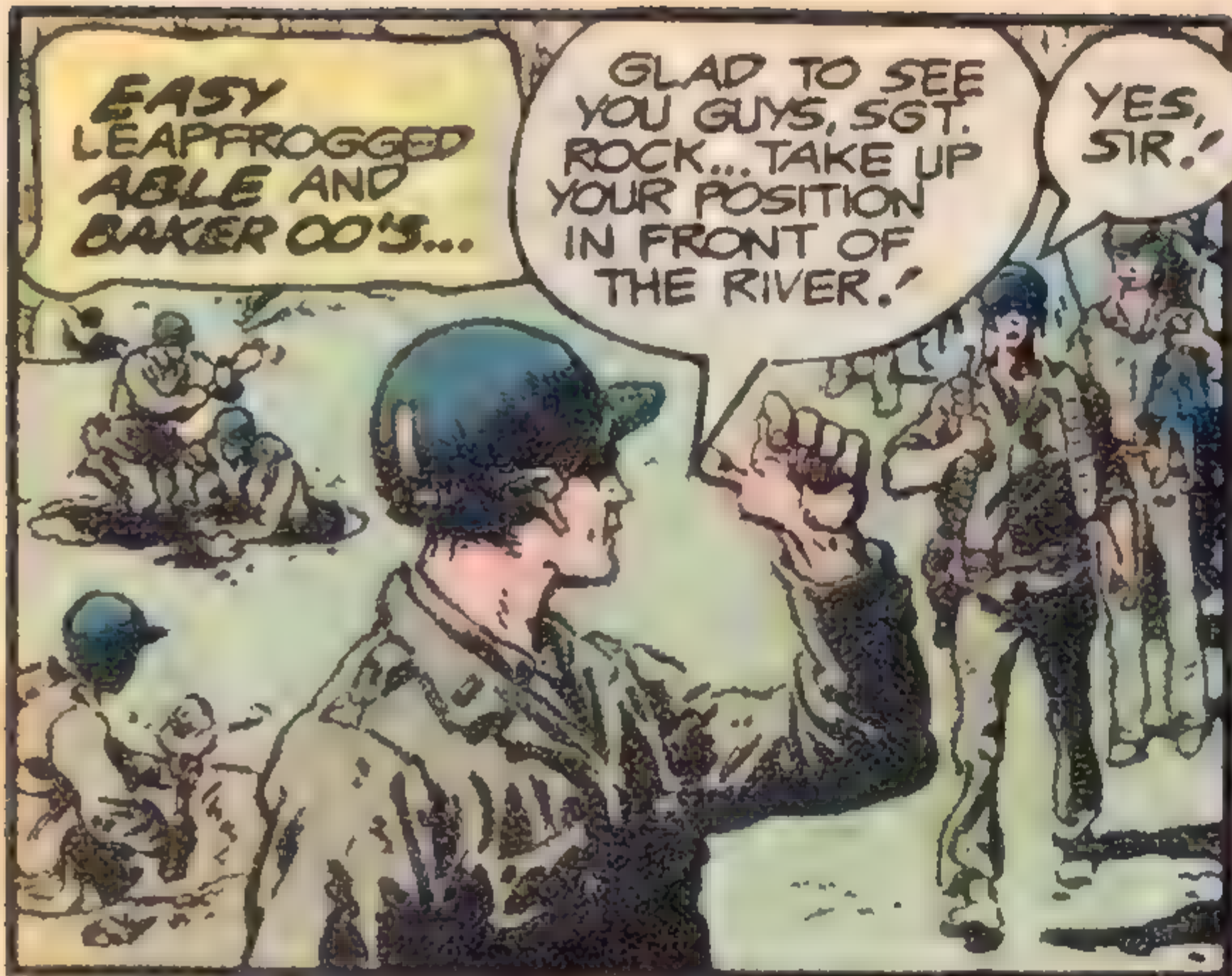
LET'S GO-- THERE'S A WAR ON.'

STOP SWEATIN' SARGE-- YOU AN' EASY'LL BE O.K..'

I'M COVERIN' YOU.'







EASY
LEAPFROGGED
ABLE AND
BAKER OO'S...

GLAD TO SEE
YOU GUYS, SGT.
ROCK... TAKE UP
YOUR POSITION
IN FRONT OF
THE RIVER.

YES,
SIR.

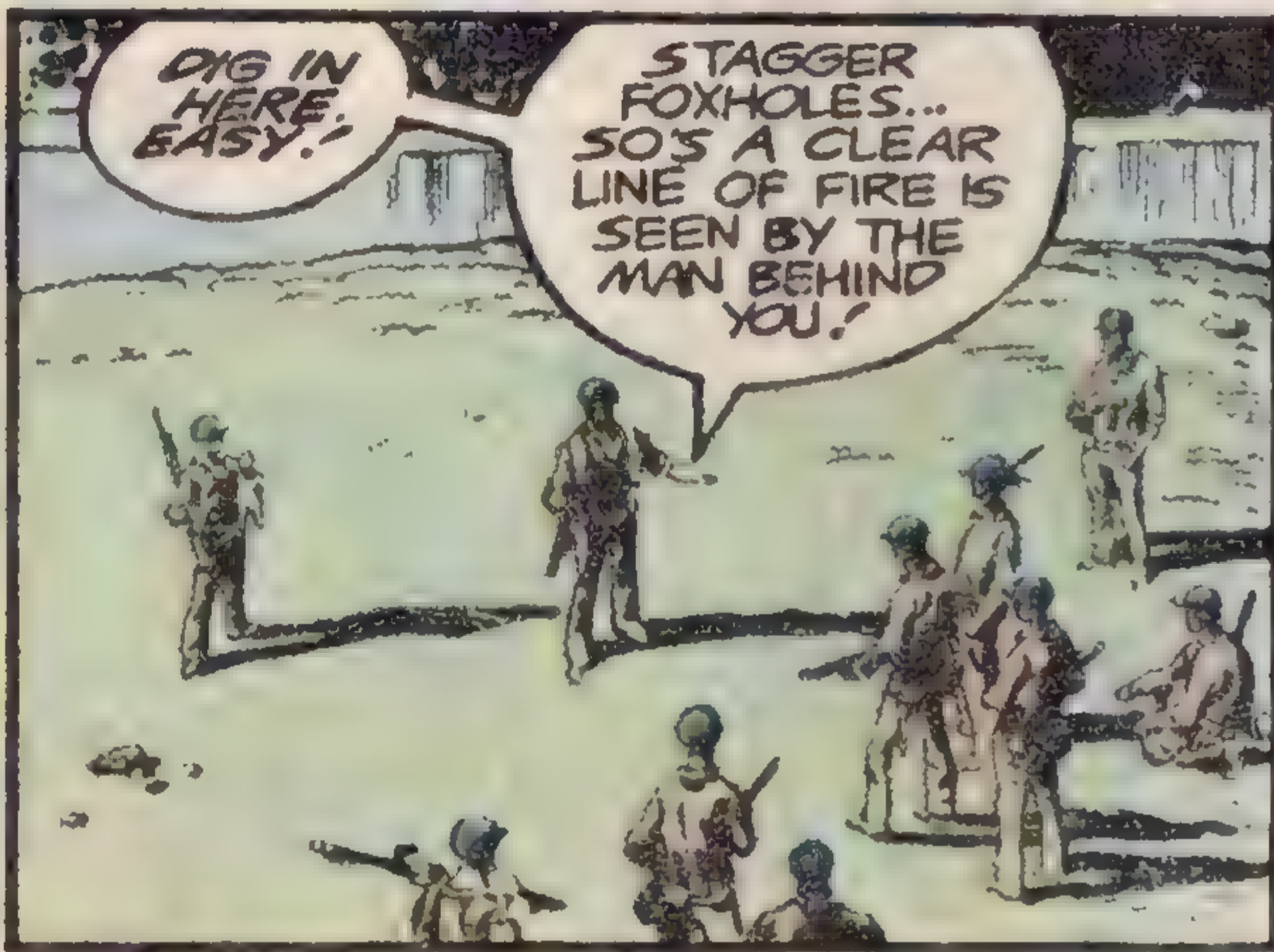


WHEN DID
THEY LET
YOU
OUTTA THE
NURSERY,
SHAVETAIL?



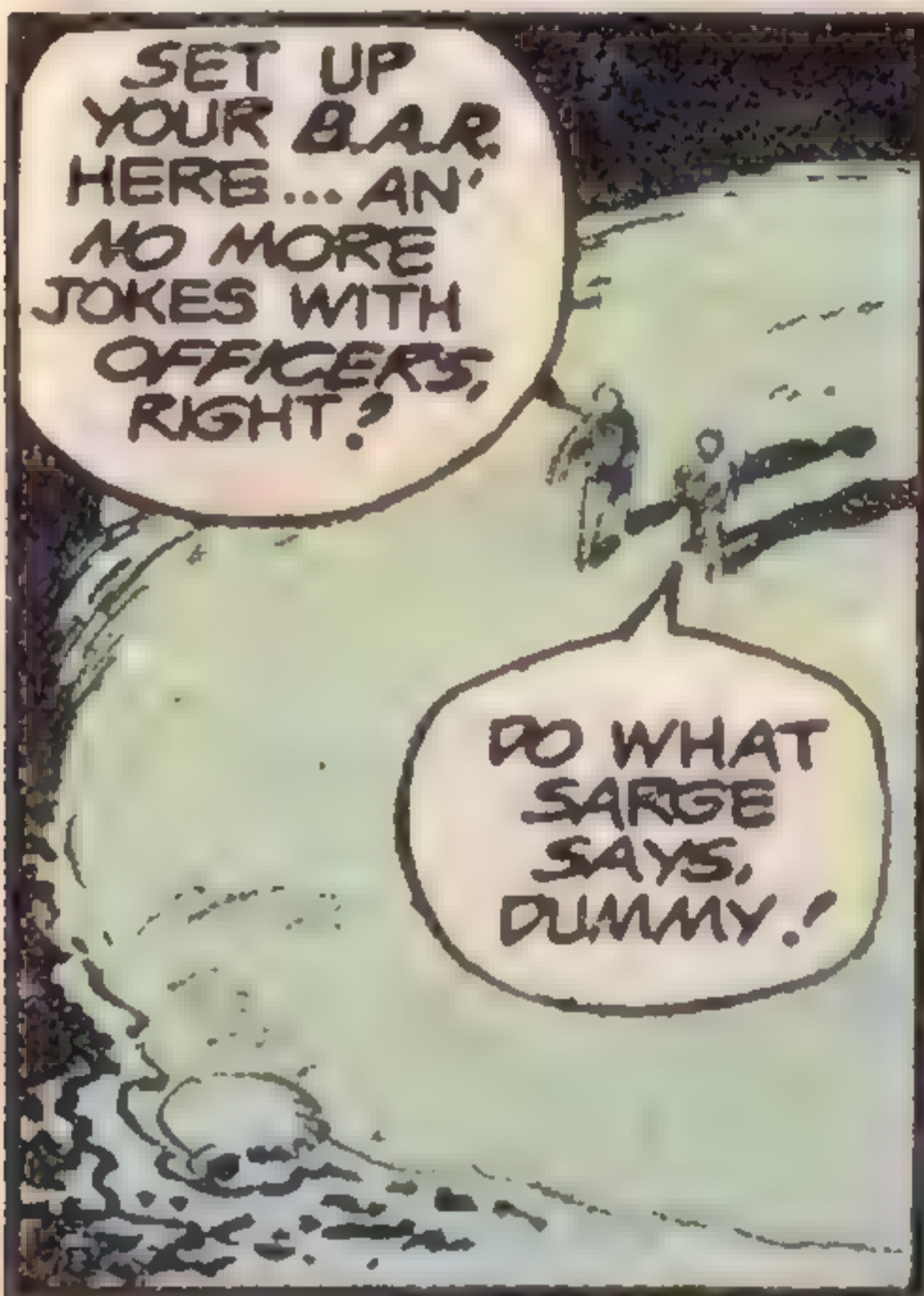
ER... SORRY,
LIEUTENANT...
JUST KIDDIN'
AROUND.

NO
OFFENSE,
SIR.



DIG IN
HERE,
EASY.

STAGGER
FOXHOLES...
SO'S A CLEAR
LINE OF FIRE IS
SEEN BY THE
MAN BEHIND
YOU.

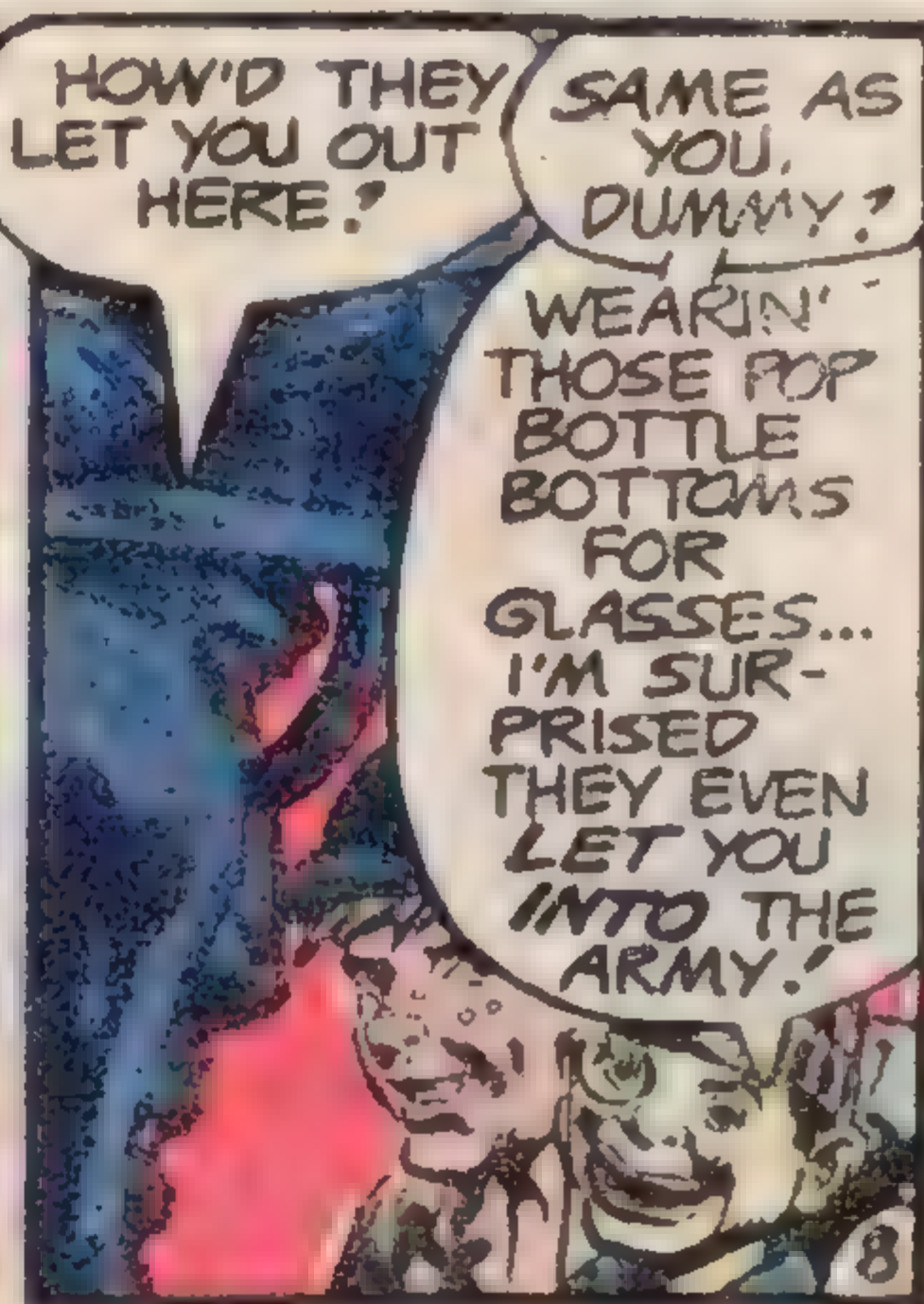


SET UP
YOUR B.A.R.
HERE... AN'
NO MORE
JOKES WITH
OFFICERS,
RIGHT?

DO WHAT
SARGE
SAYS,
DUMMY.



DIG THAT
FOXHOLE
DEEP,
DUMMY--AN'
LEAVE THE
FIGHTIN' TO
ME.



HOW'D THEY
LET YOU OUT
HERE?

SAME AS
YOU,
DUMMY?

WEARIN'
THOSE POP
BOTTLE
BOTTOMS
FOR
GLASSES...
I'M SUR-
PRISED
THEY EVEN
LET YOU
INTO THE
ARMY.

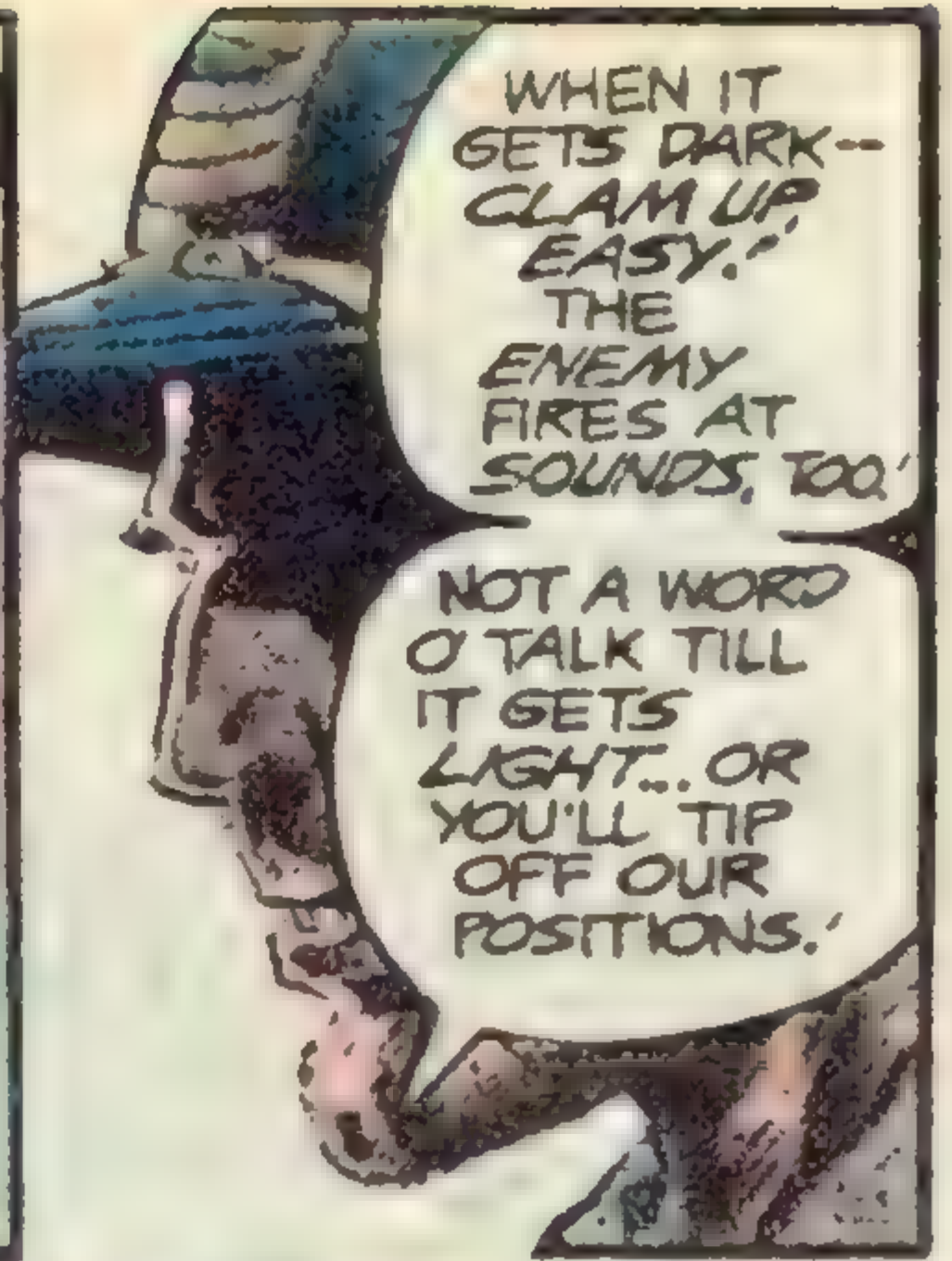


REGISTER
THE RIVER
BEFORE IT GETS
DARK SO YOU
CAN FIRE AT
SOUNDS
COMIN' FROM
YOUR RIGHT
AN' LEFT.

NO SWEAT,
SARGE!...
I'LL MAKE
SURE HE
DOES LIKE
YOU SAY.

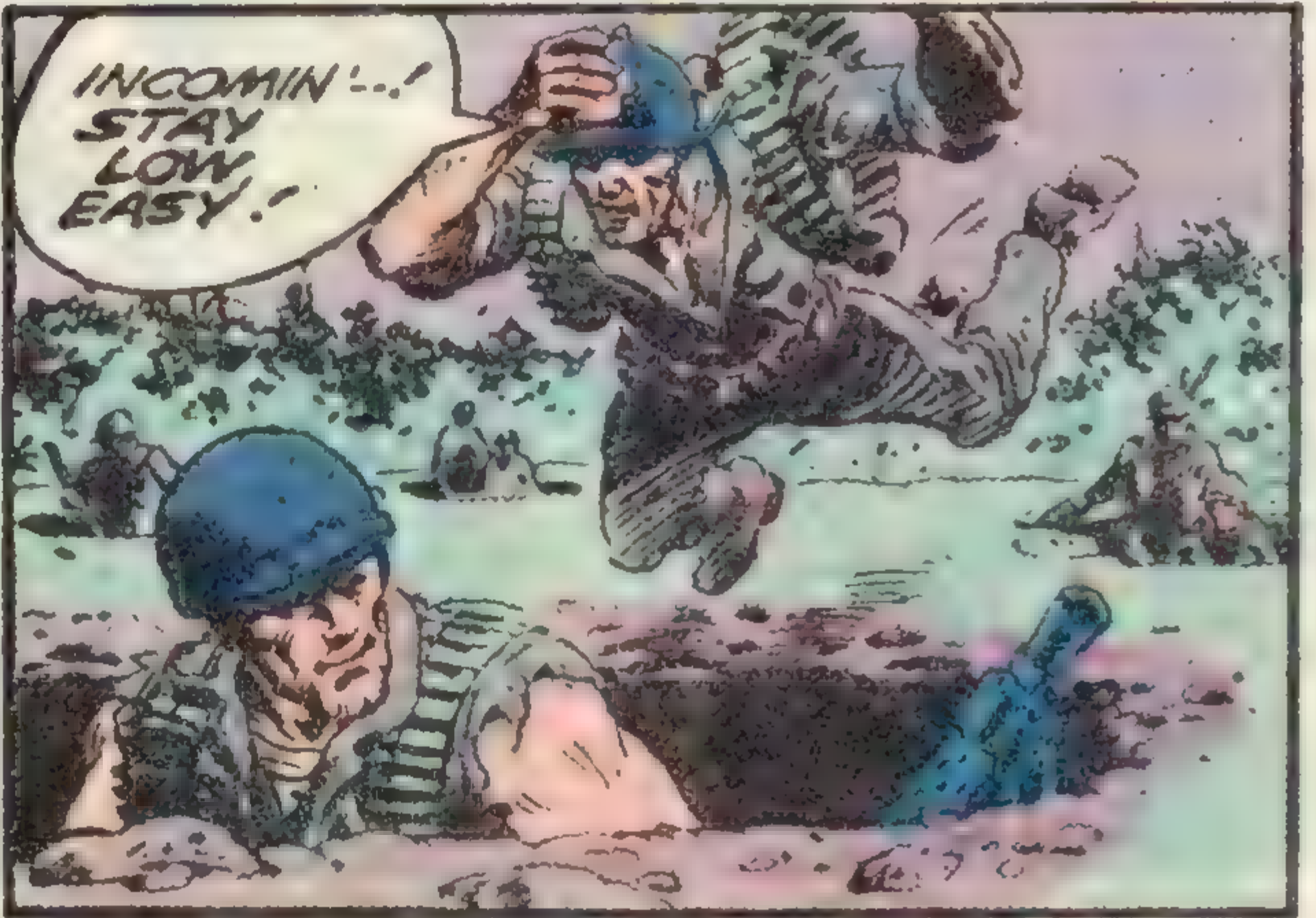


MOVE
IT,
DUMMY!

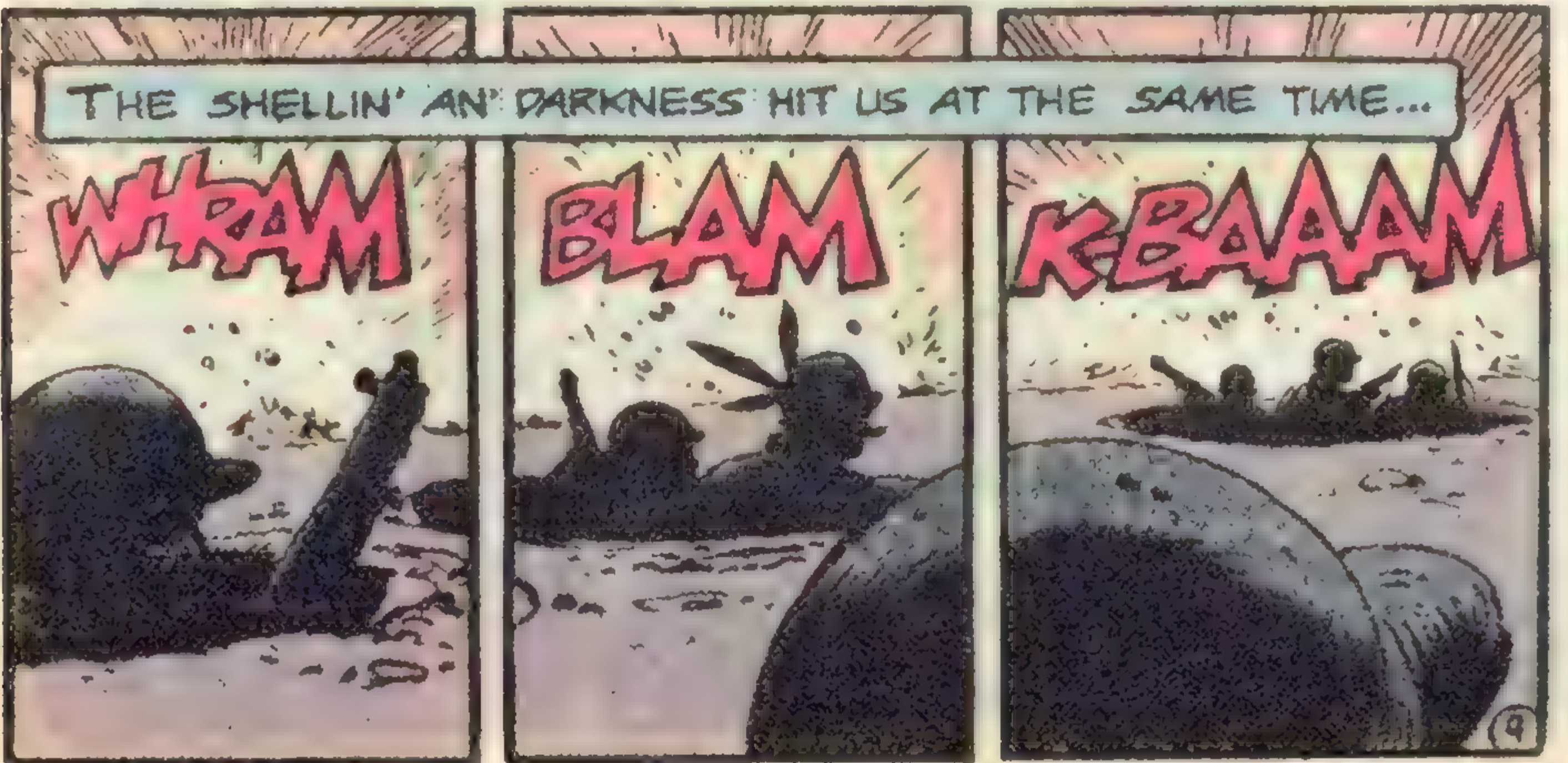


WHEN IT
GETS DARK--
CLAM UP
EASY!...
THE
ENEMY
FIRES AT
SOUNDS, TOO!

NOT A WORD
O' TALK TILL
IT GETS
LIGHT... OR
YOU'LL TIP
OFF OUR
POSITIONS!



INCOMIN'...!
STAY
LOW,
EASY!



THE SHELLIN' AN' DARKNESS HIT US AT THE SAME TIME...

WHAM

BLAM

K-BAAAAM

THE SHELLIN' NEVER STOPPED...IT WAS WHITE-HOT LIKE THE BLAST FURNACES OF THE STEEL MILLS...

WHAM BLAM KRAM

THE ENEMY'LL BE CROSSIN' UNDER COVER OF THE BARRAGE--WHILE WE'RE PINNED HERE!

YEAH...AN' THE NEW BAR MAN'LL CATCH IT FIRST!

CAN'T WE DO ANYTHING FOR THE NEW GUY?

ALL WE CAN DO IS SIT...AN' WAIT FOR THE BARRAGE TO LIFT, BULLDOZER!

THE ENEMY WAS CROSSIN' THE RIVER... WAVE AFTER WAVE... FIRIN' AN' TOSSIN' POTATO MASHERS AHEAD OF 'EM...

ROW KROW ROW

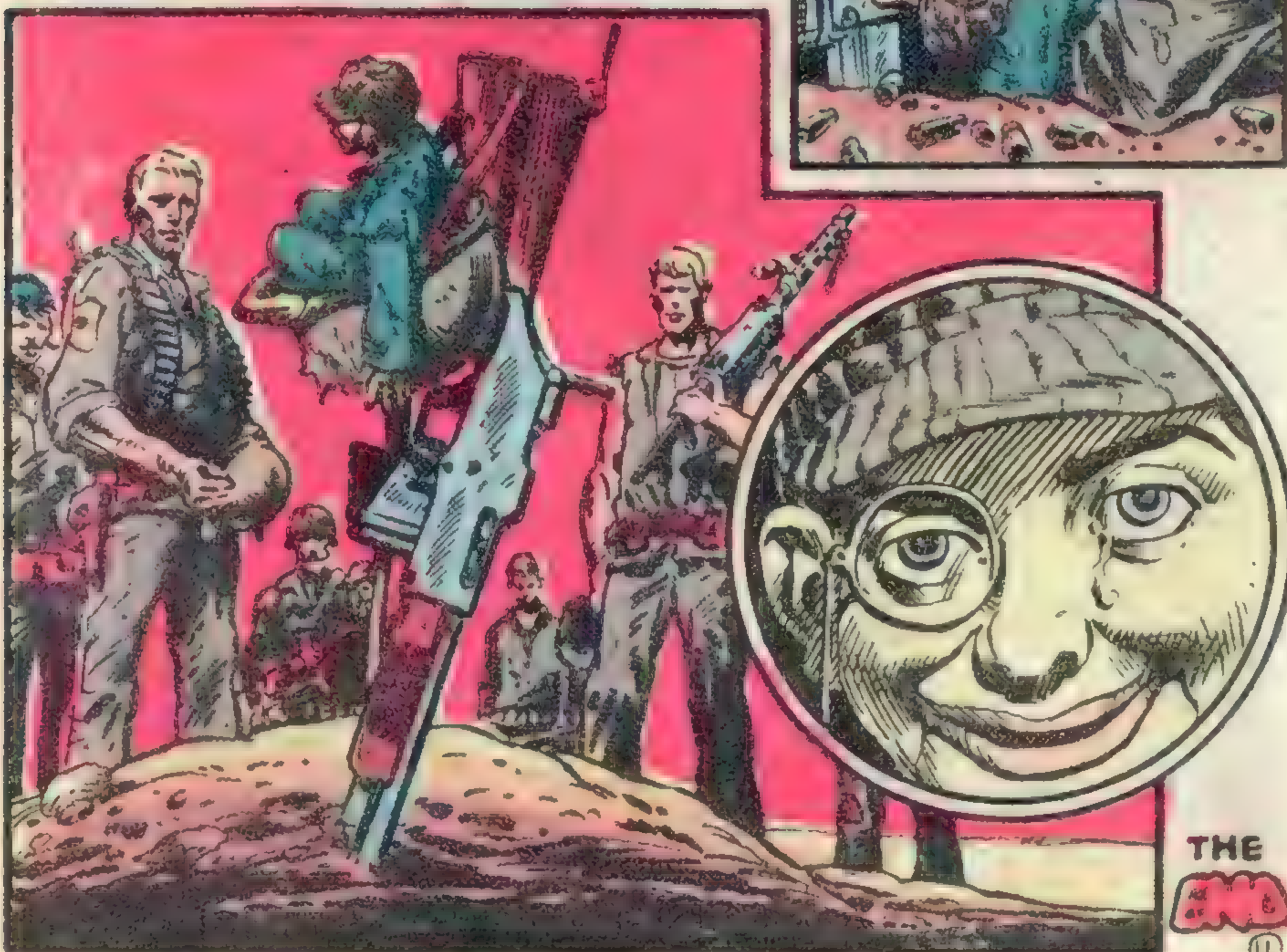
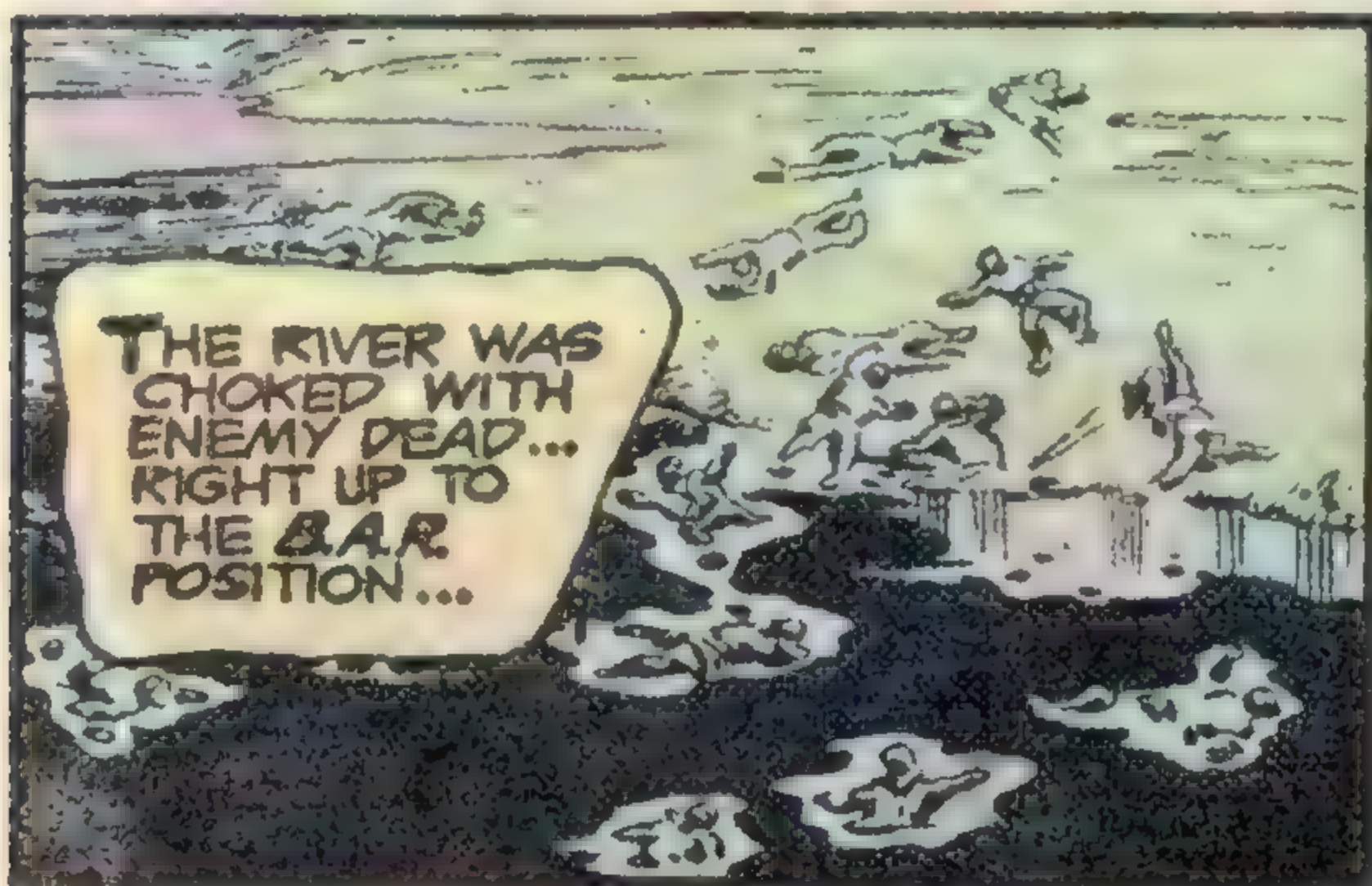
BRRRRP

RATATATAT

... ONLY ONE MAN LAY BETWEEN THEM... AND THE REST OF EASY!

BUDDA BUDDA

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA



THEY ARE THE BEST THERE IS: THE CHANGELING, SHAPE SHIFTER SUPREME; CYBORG, HALF MAN / HALF ROBOT; KID FLASH, SUPER-SPEEDSTER; RAVEN, MISTRESS OF MAGIC; ROBIN, THE TEEN WONDER; STARFIRE, ALIEN POWERHOUSE; AND WONDER GIRL, THE AMAZING AMAZON! TOGETHER THEY ARE...

THE NEW TEEN TITANS

A DAY IN THE LIVES...

THE DAY BEGINS, FILLED WITH THE UNEXPECTED WARMTH OF THE COMING SPRING. WINTER COATS ARE SNUCKED FOR THE DAY, BUT NOT STORED AWAY.

THE SKIES, GRAY FOR THE PAST TEN WEEKS, ARE PAINTED BLUE-- AND WHITE CLOUDS, THICK AS COTTON BALLS, HANG LAZILY AS IF TACKED TO THE HEAVENS ABOVE.

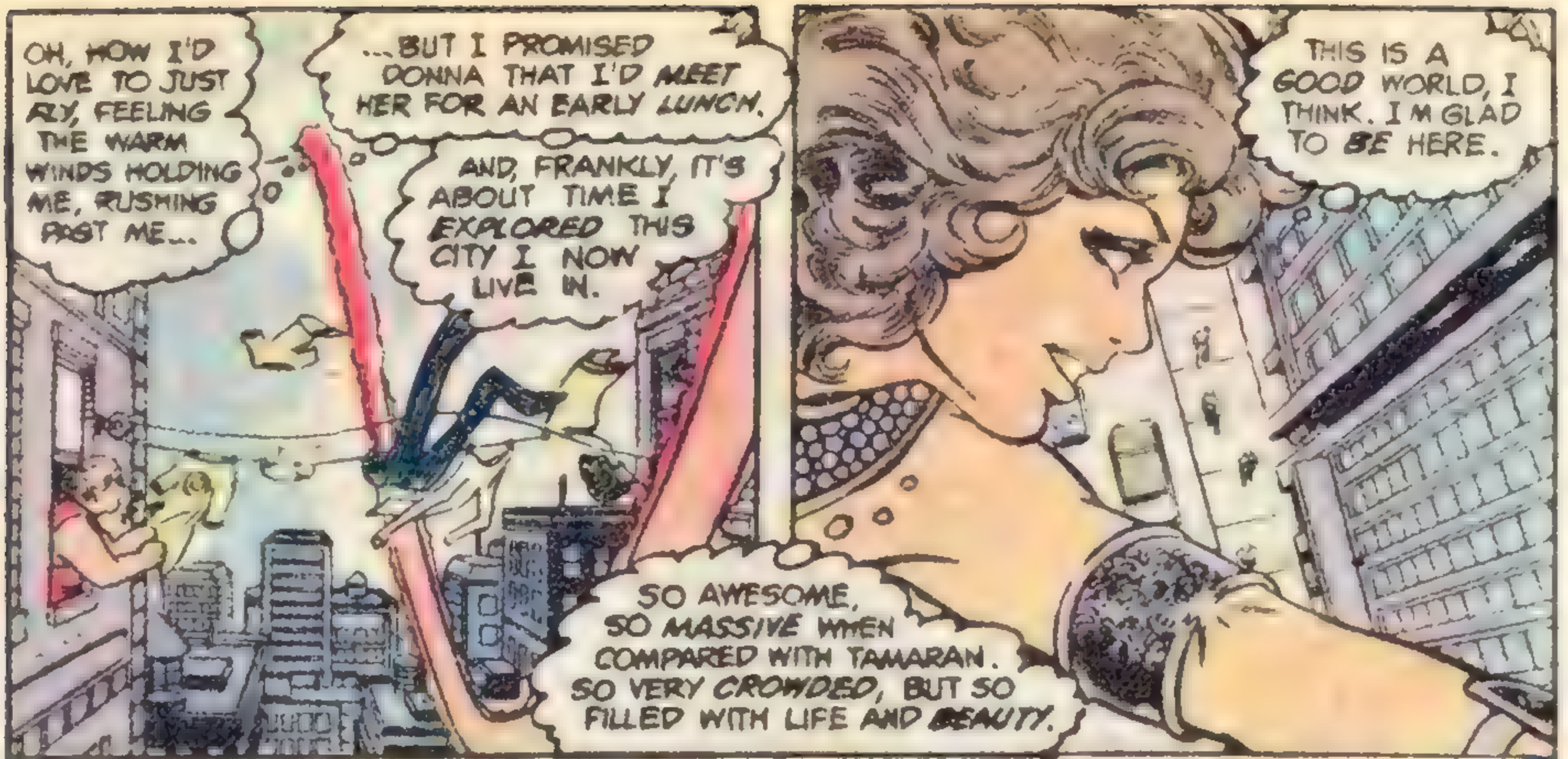
ALL IS CALM. DID WE SAY CALM? INDEED, IT IS ANYTHING BUT, FOR INTO THIS OCEAN OF BLUE STREAKS A FLASHING GOLDEN STREAM OF FIRE...

MMM! WARM FOR A CHANGE... MUCH CLOSER TO THE TROPICS OF MY HOMEWORLD TAMARAN.

WELL, THANK X'HAL. I WAS CERTAIN I WOULD FREEZE BEFORE SPRING FINALLY CAME.

BUT THIS... THIS WEATHER'S DELICIOUS! I LOVE IT!

STARFIRE, IF YOU NEED TO KNOW. STARFIRE OF THE NEW TEEN TITANS...



OH, HOW I'D LOVE TO JUST RLY, FEELING THE WARM WINDS HOLDING ME, RUSHING PAST ME...

...BUT I PROMISED DONNA THAT I'D MEET HER FOR AN EARLY LUNCH.

AND, FRANKLY, IT'S ABOUT TIME I EXPLORED THIS CITY I NOW LIVE IN.

THIS IS A GOOD WORLD, I THINK. I'M GLAD TO BE HERE.

SO AWESOME, SO MASSIVE WHEN COMPARED WITH TAMARAN. SO VERY CROWDED, BUT SO FILLED WITH LIFE AND BEAUTY.

THOUGH SO MANY OF ITS CUSTOMS STILL ELUDE ME.

SO VERY CONFUSING.

THE SILVER FOX ADVERTISING AGENCY...

DONNA AND I ARE FRIENDS, YET BEFORE I SEE HER I AM SUPPOSED TO DRESS DIFFERENTLY THAN I AM NOW.

OKAY, OKAY... JEANIE, A LITTLE TO THE RIGHT, PLEASE. SANDY, ARCH THAT HIP.

PERFECT, JUST PERFECT...

LIHHH, CANDY, TRY TO STAND STILL, WILL YOU, PLEASE?

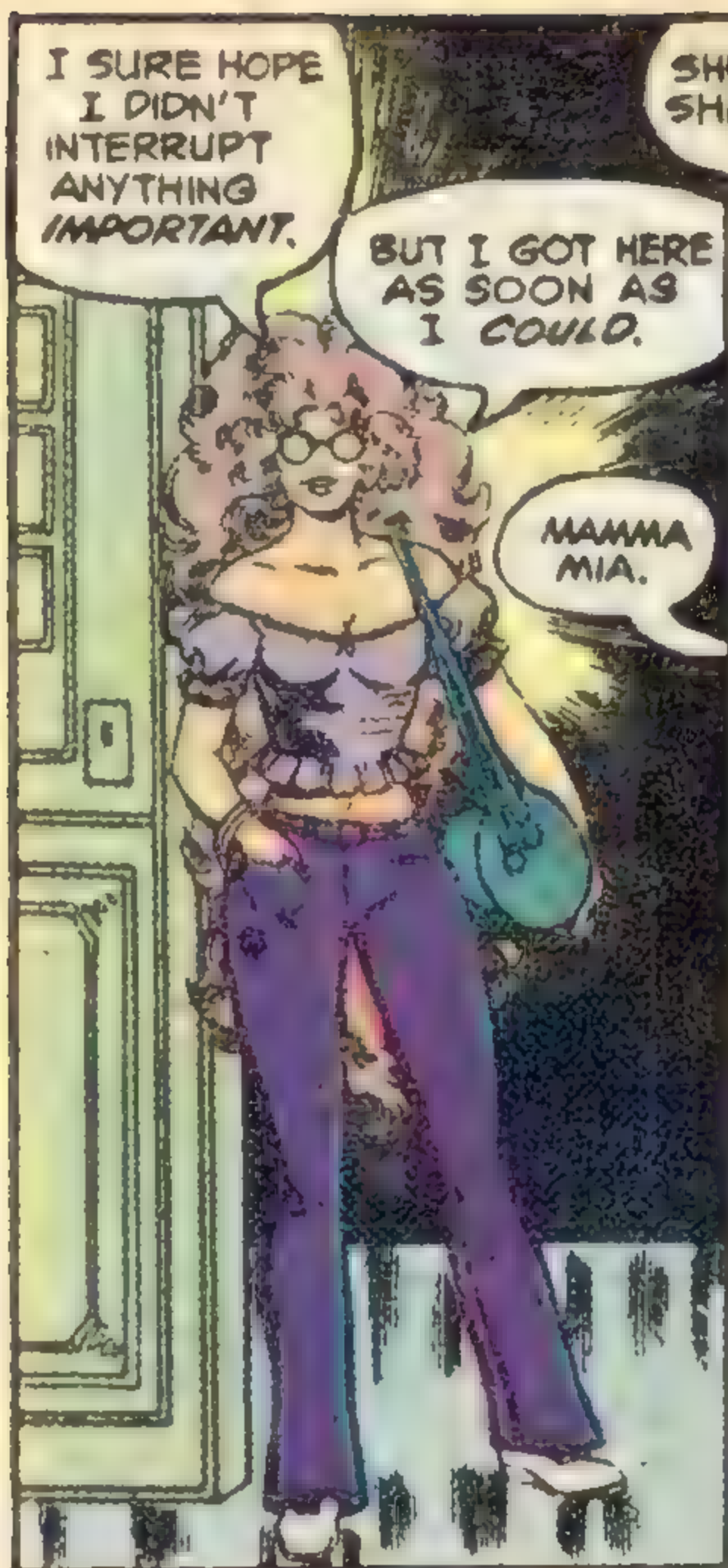
OH, YEAH, SURE, MISS TROY. LIKE, Y'KNOW, I'M RILLY TRYIN', BUT...

...WELL, IT'S JUST SO HARD, LIKE, I MEAN... KEEPIN' STILL IS SUCH A DRAG.

AND I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO CALL HER MONDER GAY... YET, WHILE FIGHTING, I CAN'T CALL HER DONNA. SO CONFUSING.

YES, CANDY, I KNOW HOW HARD IT IS, BUT THAT'S WHY THEY PAY YOU THE BIG BUCKS

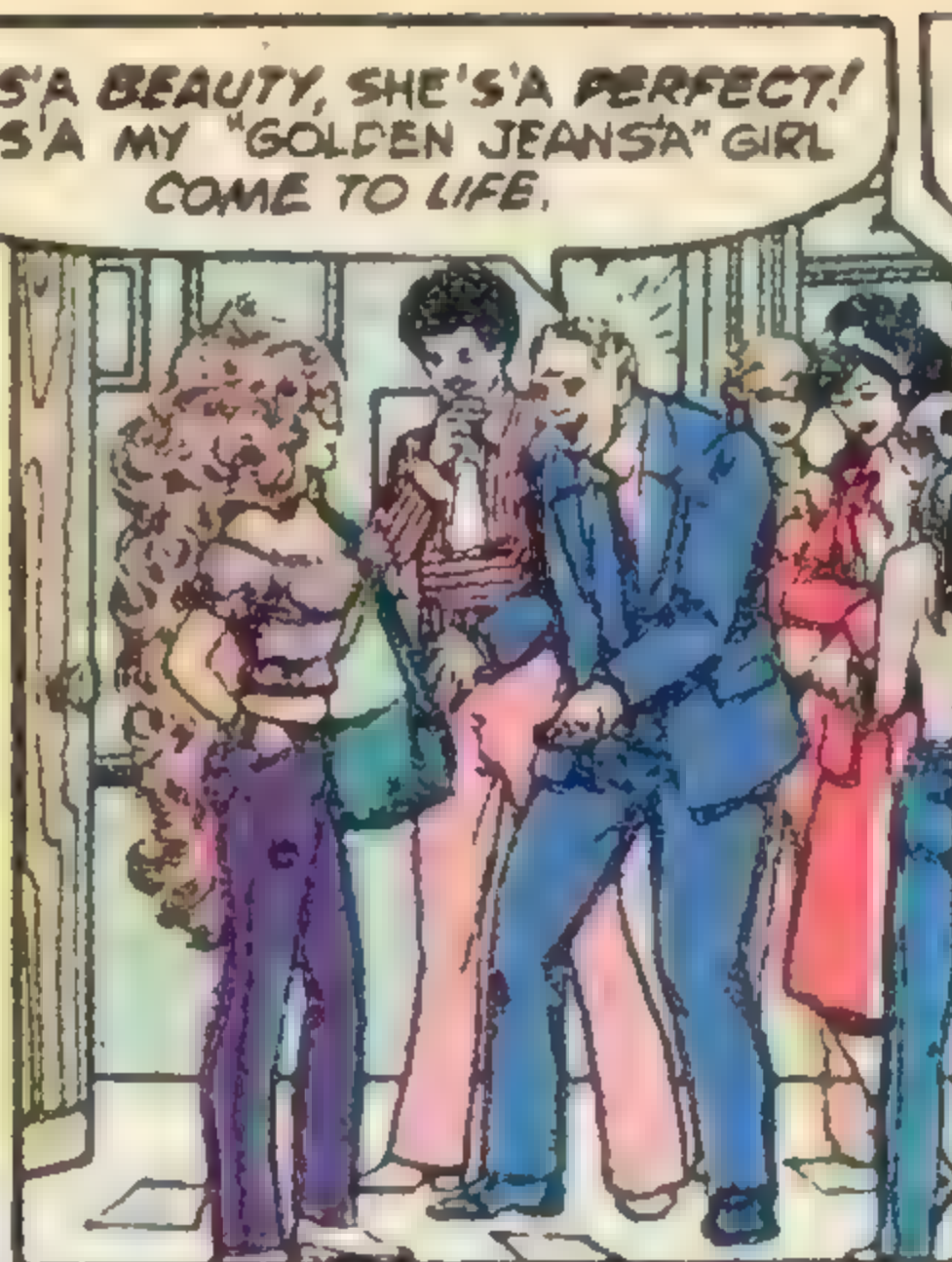
SIGH



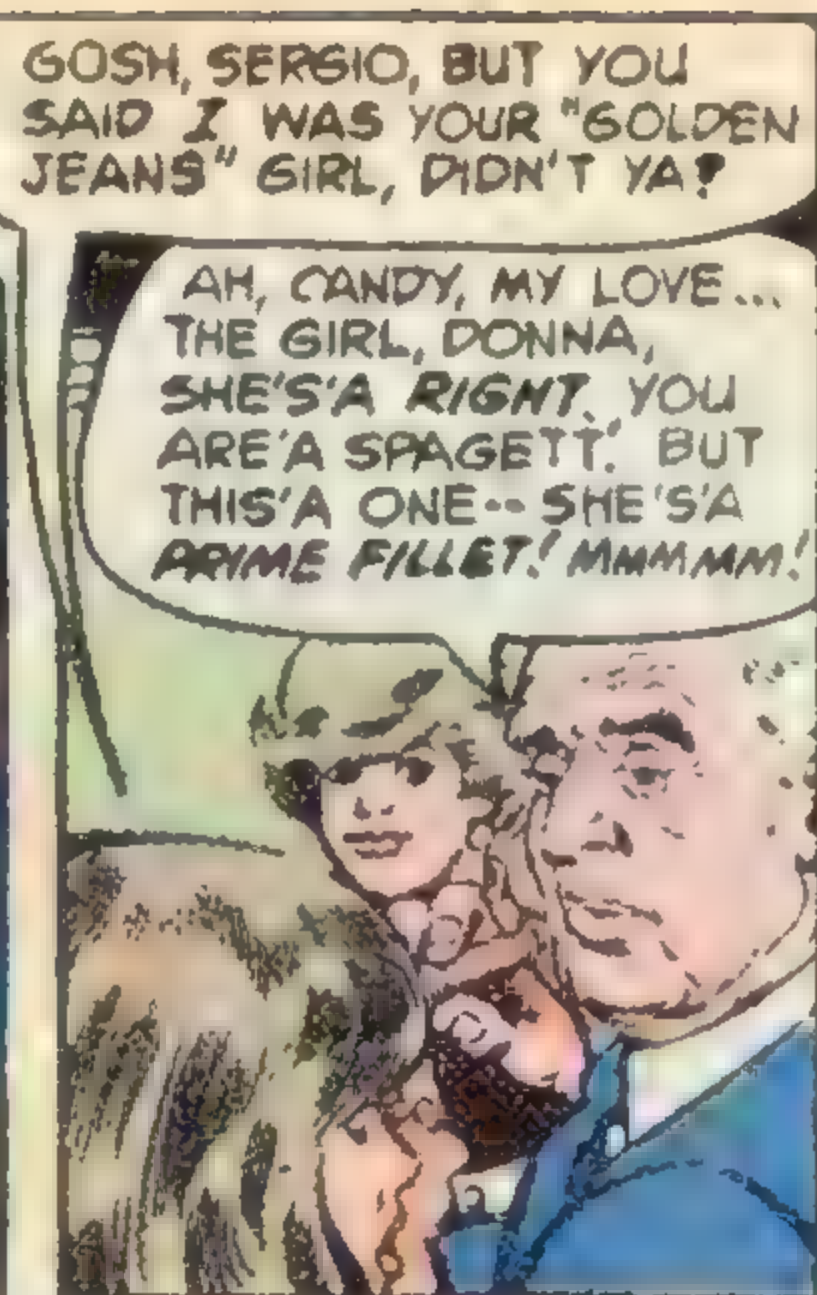
I SURE HOPE
I DIDN'T
INTERRUPT
ANYTHING
IMPORTANT.

BUT I GOT HERE
AS SOON AS
I COULD.

MAMMA
MIA.



SHE'S A BEAUTY, SHE'S A PERFECT!
SHE'S A MY "GOLDEN JEANS" GIRL
COME TO LIFE.

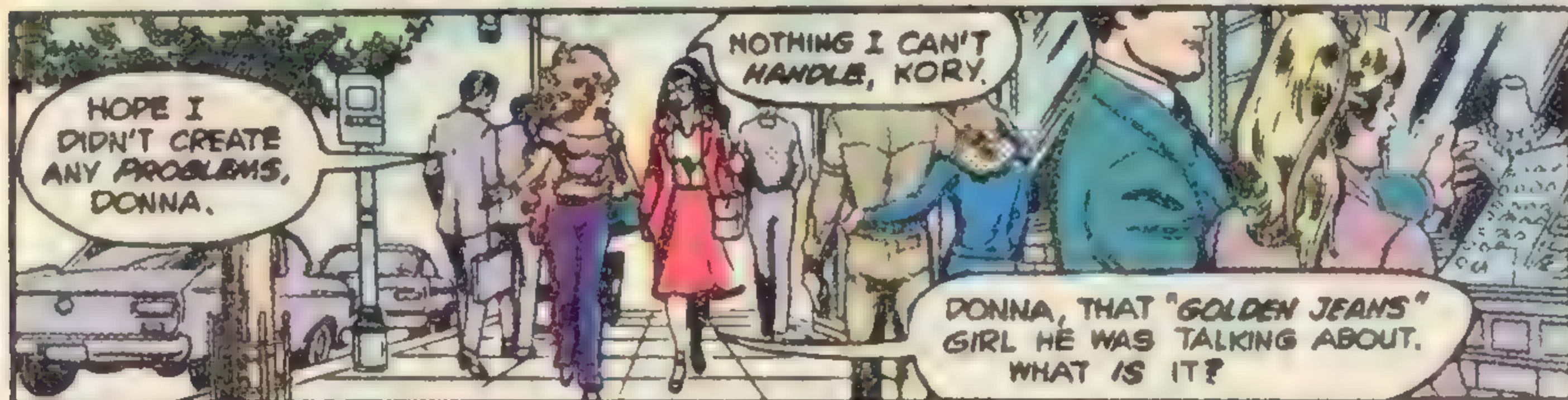


AH, CANDY, MY LOVE...
THE GIRL, DONNA,
SHE'S A RIGHT. YOU
ARE A SPAGETT. BUT
THIS A ONE-- SHE'S A
PRIME FILLET! MMMMM!



DONNA, LET ME GET BACK TO
YOU. THIS IS GETTING
COMPLICATED.

YEAH, I COULD USE
SOME FRESH AIR ABOUT
NOW. SEE YA LATER.



HOPE I
DIDN'T CREATE
ANY PROBLEMS,
DONNA.

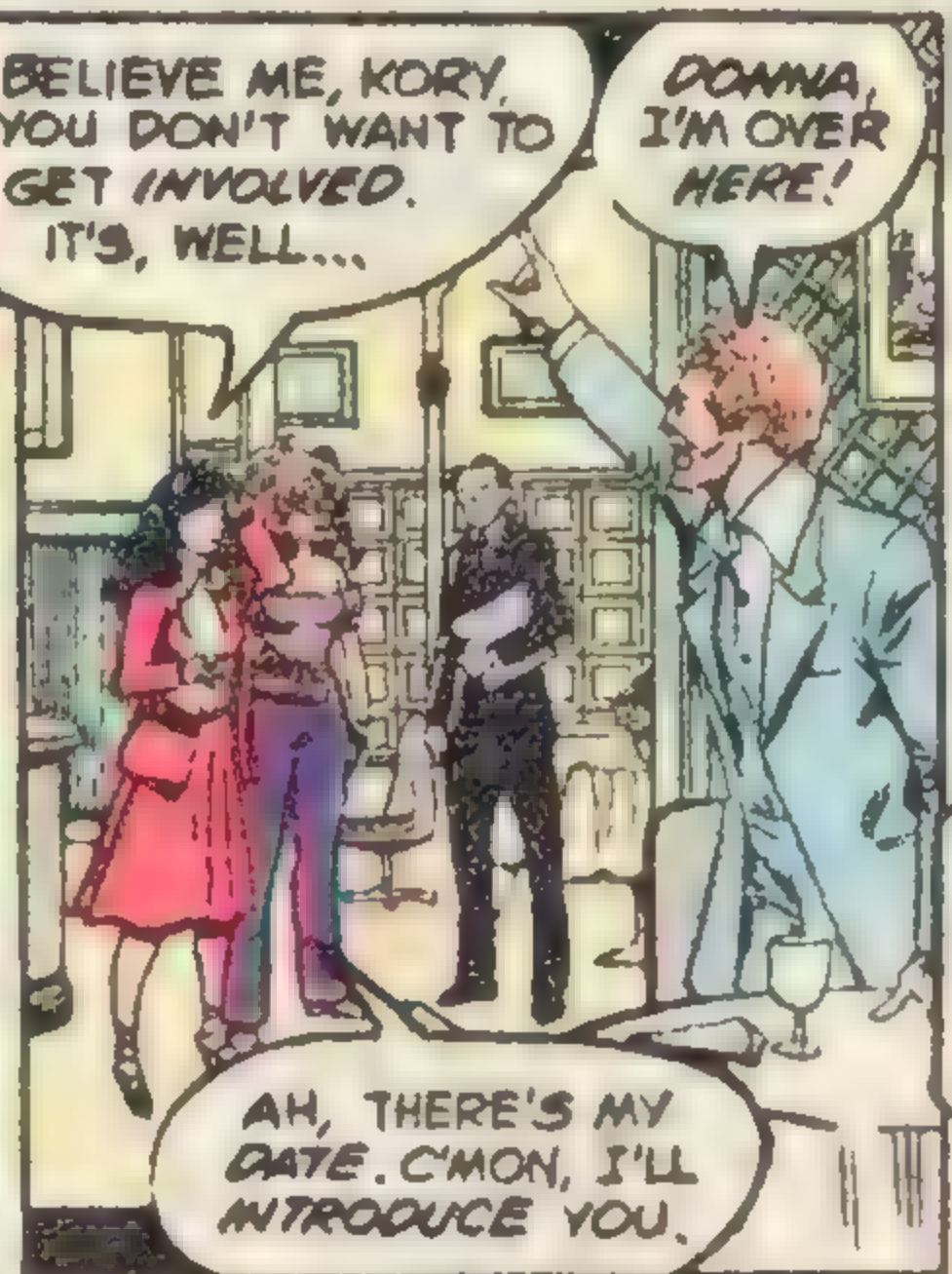
NOTHING I CAN'T
HANDLE, KORY.

DONNA, THAT "GOLDEN JEANS"
GIRL HE WAS TALKING ABOUT.
WHAT IS IT?



GOOD
MORNINGS,
MISS TROY.
YOUR
PARTY'S
WAITING.

THANKS,
MAX.



BELIEVE ME, KORY,
YOU DON'T WANT TO
GET INVOLVED.
IT'S, WELL...

DONNA,
I'M OVER
HERE!

AH, THERE'S MY
DATE. C'MON, I'LL
INTRODUCE YOU.



KORY, THIS IS TERRY LONG
TERRY, I'D LIKE YOU TO
MEET...

DON'T TELL
ME, HONEY.
YOU'RE
KORIAN'D'R,
RIGHT?

DONNA'S TOLD
ME ALL
ABOUT YOU.
YOU'RE AS
LOVELY AS
SHE SAID.

THE MID-MORNING SUN CASTS A SHIMMERING AURA OVER THE FACE OF TITANS' TOWER, A TEN-STORY SKYSCRAPER JUST OFF MANHATTAN'S EAST COAST...

YOU SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, RAVEN?

I AM CERTAIN, RICHARD. I HAVE A HOME HERE NOW...

...AND I'VE SPOKEN TO WALLACE... ABOUT US, ABOUT MANY THINGS.

BEING SHUNTED AWAY FOR SO MANY YEARS IN THE TEMPLE AZARATH HAS NOT PREPARED ME FOR THIS OUTSIDE WORLD.

WELL, THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO LEARN THINGS, RAVEN, BUT I'M SURE YOU'LL PICK WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU.

LISSEN, I'M KIND'A LATE... HAVE A SHOW AT THE CIRCUS I'M WORKING WITH NOW, THEN BACK TO GOTHAM TONIGHT...

SO I'LL SEE YOU AT THE NEXT TITANS' MEETING... IN ABOUT A WEEK.

TAKE CARE, RICHARD... AND THANK YOU.

HE HAS CONVINCED ME THAT IT WOULD BE WISE NOW TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE AND THIS CITY...

AS THE SKYCYCLE SLIDES WESTWARD AWAY FROM NEW YORK CITY...

BETWEEN THE TITANS AND THE CIRCUS, I HAVEN'T HAD A REST IN WEEKS.

BACK IN THE TITANS' TOWER...

WALLACE IS RIGHT, THERE IS MUCH I NEED TO LEARN.

BUT, THIS MANHATTAN UNIVERSITY WALLACE SUGGESTED...

STILL, IT IS A PLACE FOR LEARNING. VERY WELL THEN...

--I SHALL LET MY SOUL-SELF EXPLORE THIS SCHOOL... SEE WHAT THERE IS TO SEE.

SURE COULD USE A BREAK... JUST TO GET MY HEAD TOGETHER.

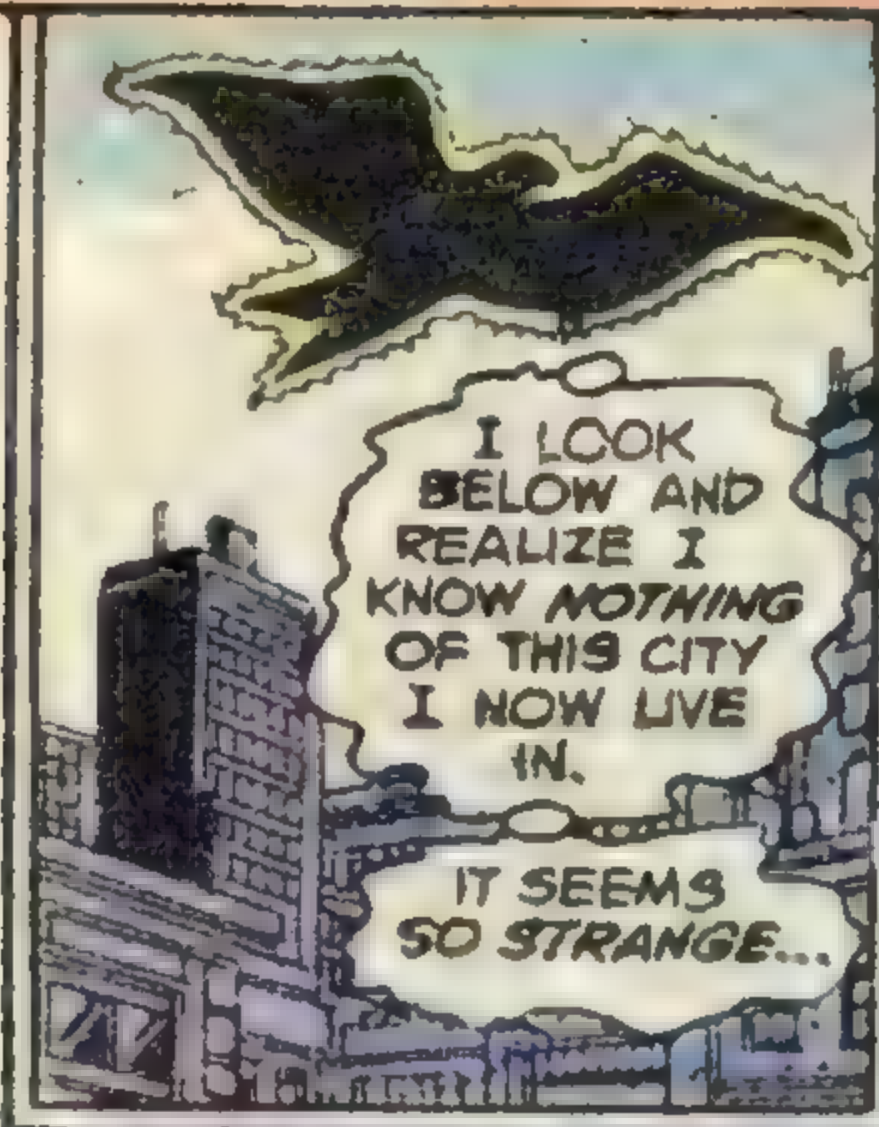
MAN, I HOPE REJOINING THAT BIG TOP IS A GOOD IDEA.

AND ONLY THEN SHALL I MAKE MY FINAL DECISION!

LIKE SOME GREAT GRIM SHADOW, RAVEN'S ASTRAL SELF RISES FROM THE MEDITATING FIGURE...

5

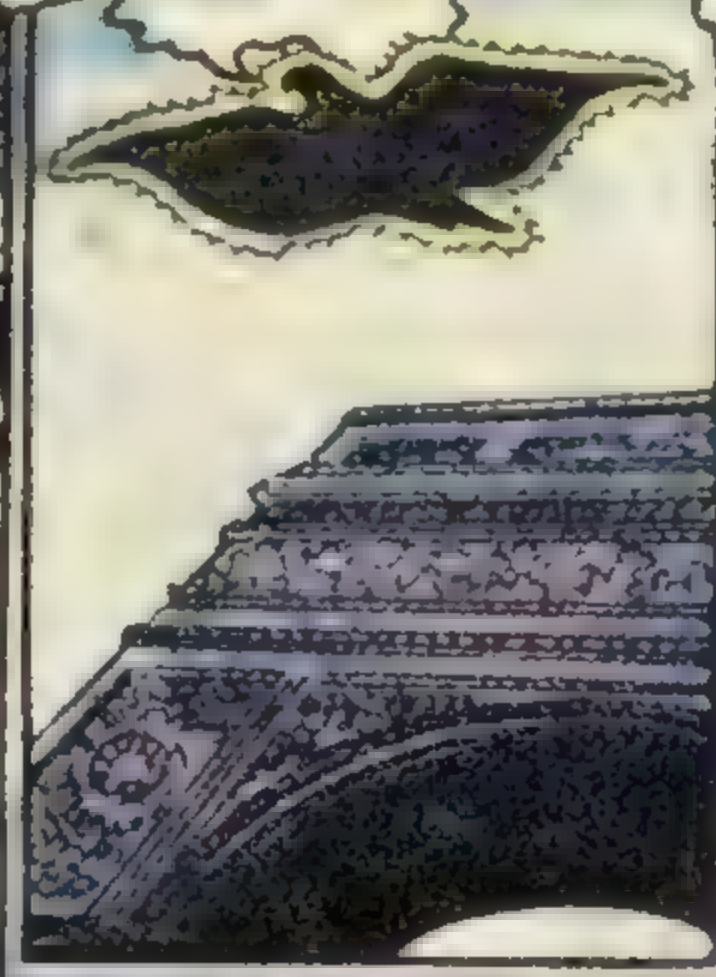
...AND SOARS LAZILY ABOVE THE MOST MAGNIFICENT CITY ON EARTH...



I LOOK BELOW AND REALIZE I KNOW NOTHING OF THIS CITY I NOW LIVE IN.

IT SEEMS SO STRANGE...

...AND I A STRANGER TO IT.



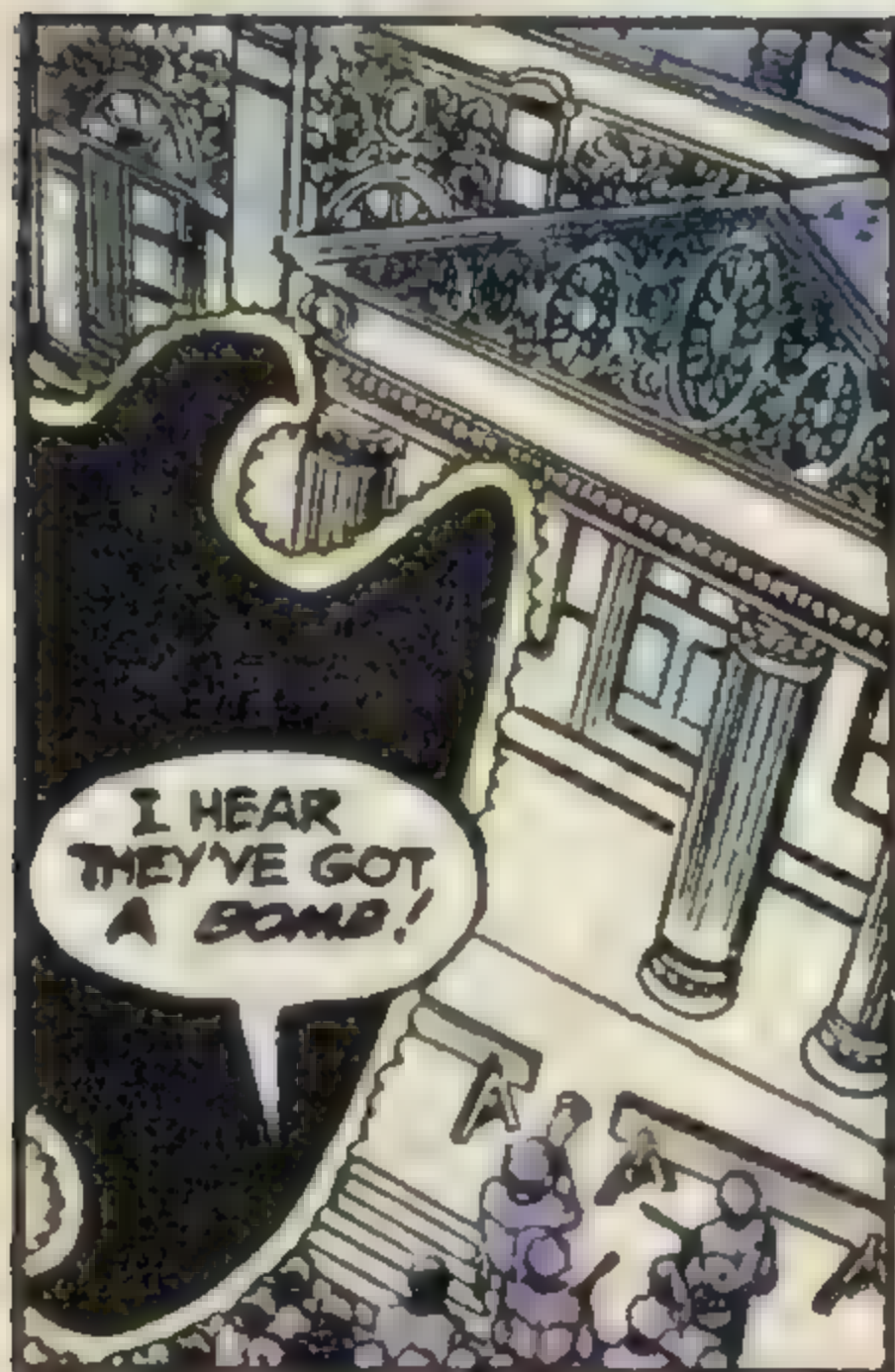
PERHAPS MY DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE. IF I MUST LIVE ON THIS WORLD, I MUST LEARN ABOUT IT.

EH? SOMETHING IS WRONG BELOW...

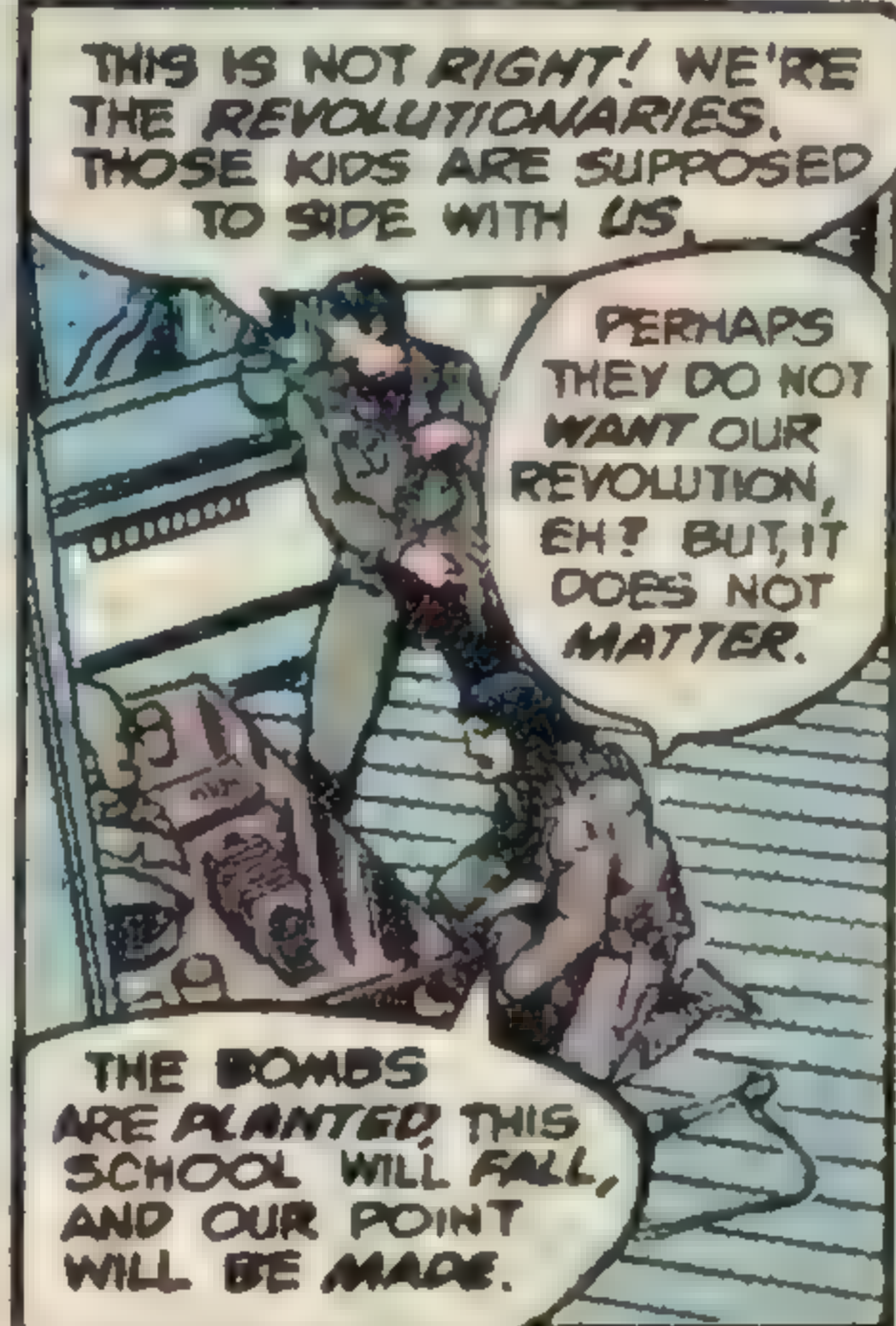
WHY AREN'T THE COPS GETTIN' THOSE CREEPS OUTTA THERE?

WE HAVE YOU SURROUNDED. LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND SURRENDER NOW.

LEAVE OUR SCHOOL ALONE!



I HEAR THEY'VE GOT A BOMB!



THIS IS NOT RIGHT! WE'RE THE REVOLUTIONARIES. THOSE KIDS ARE SUPPOSED TO SIDE WITH US.

PERHAPS THEY DO NOT WANT OUR REVOLUTION, EH? BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER.

THE BOMBS ARE PLANTED. THIS SCHOOL WILL FALL, AND OUR POINT WILL BE MADE.



THERE IS NEVER A POINT TO VIOLENCE.

MIKEL--? WH-WHAT IS THAT THING?

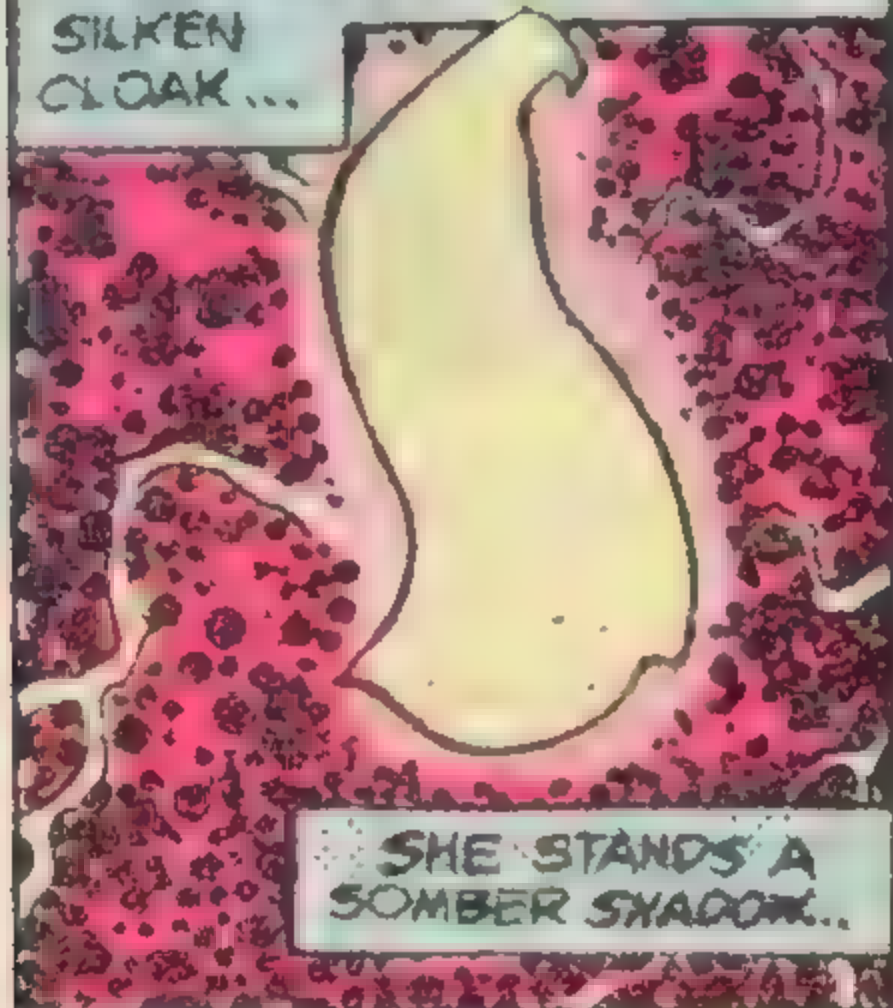


MIKEL!!?

--AND I WILL NOT PERMIT YOU TO CALLOUSLY DESTROY THIS WHICH IS SO VALUABLE.

BLAM!

BUT RAVEN IS SILENT AS HER LONG EBON CAPE ENCYCLES THE FRIGHTENED TERRORIST. THE BLACKNESS OF SPACE SEEMS TO BURN WITHIN THE FOLDS OF HER SILKEN CLOAK...



SHE STANDS A SOMBER SHADOW...

WHILE, IN TITANS' TOWER, RAVEN'S HUMAN FORM SUDDENLY REALIZES THE TIME...



HER SOUL SELF CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM HER BODY FOR MORE THAN FIVE SHORT MINUTES...



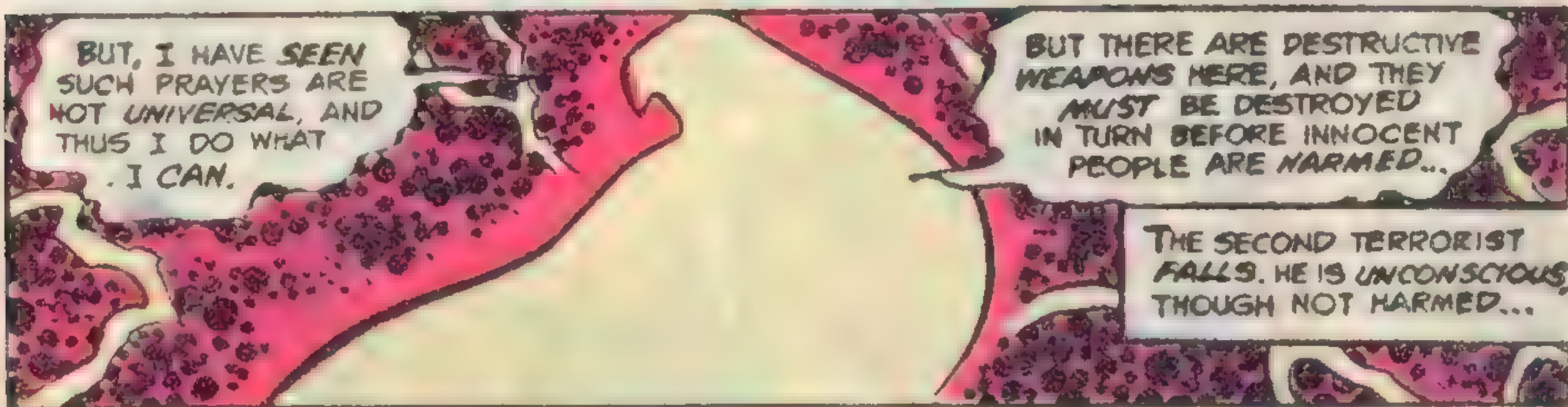
FIFTY-EIGHT SECONDS REMAIN BEFORE AN UNSPEAKABLE HORROR WILL TRANSPIRE...

FIFTY-EIGHT SECONDS TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE.



I AM NOT A THING--

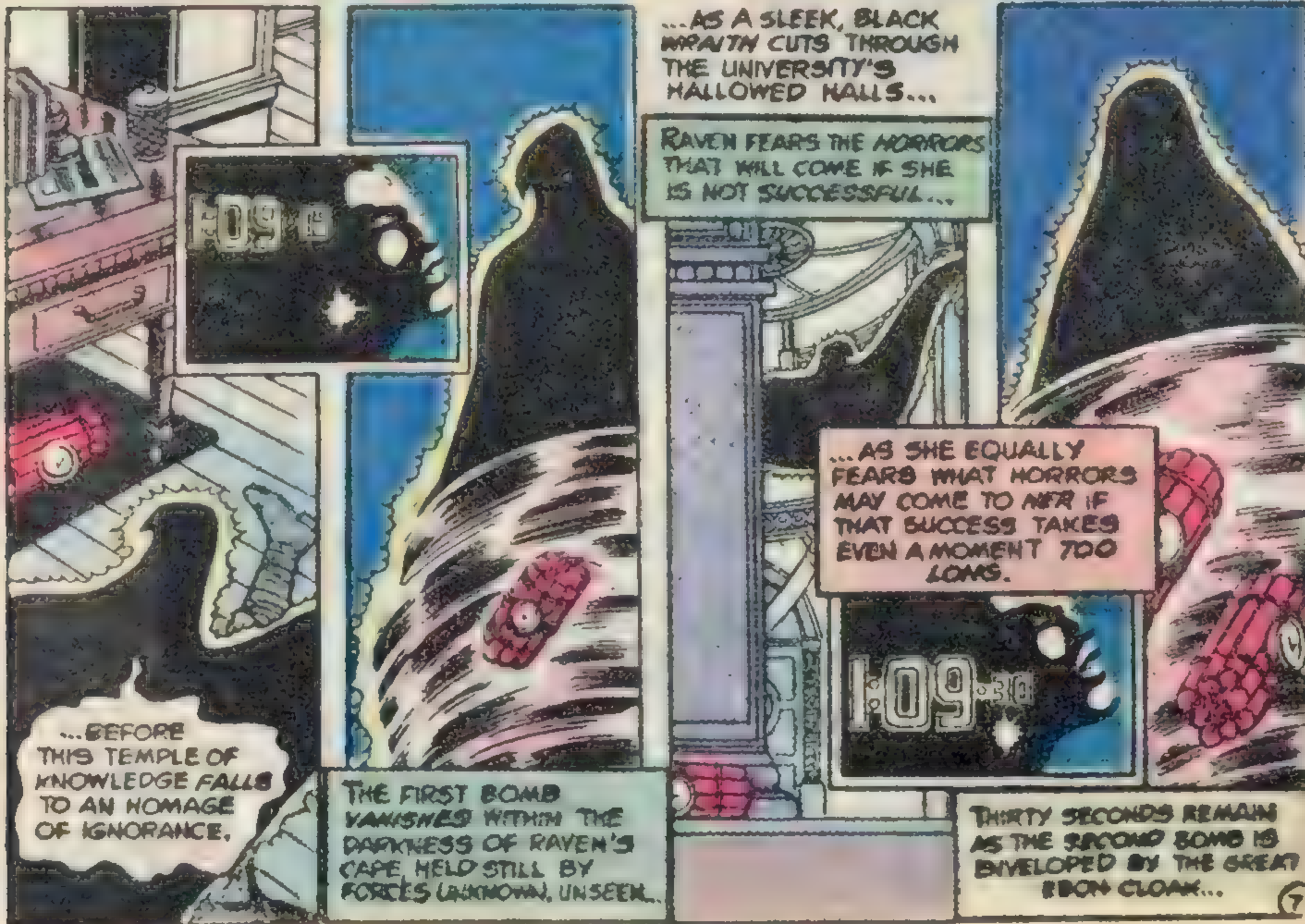
I AM A CONSCIENCE, A HOPE, A PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING.



BUT, I HAVE SEEN SUCH PRAYERS ARE NOT UNIVERSAL, AND THUS I DO WHAT I CAN.

BUT THERE ARE DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS HERE, AND THEY MUST BE DESTROYED IN TURN BEFORE INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE HARMED...

THE SECOND TERRORIST FALLS. HE IS UNCONSCIOUS, THOUGH NOT HARMED...



...AS A SLEEK, BLACK WRAITH CUTS THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY'S HALLOWED HALLS...

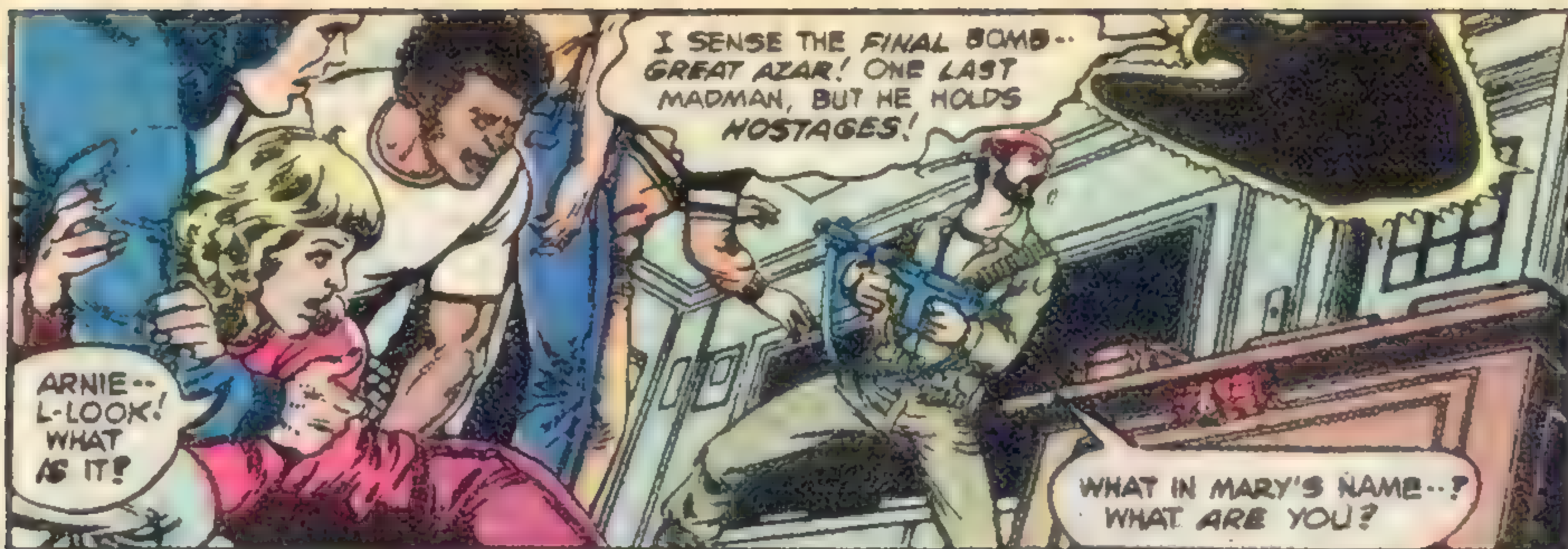
RAVEN FEARS THE HORRORS THAT WILL COME IF SHE IS NOT SUCCESSFUL...

...AS SHE EQUALLY FEARS WHAT HORRORS MAY COME TO HER IF THAT SUCCESS TAKES EVEN A MOMENT TOO LONG.

...BEFORE THIS TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE FALLS TO AN HOMAGE OF IGNORANCE.

THE FIRST BOMB VANISHES WITHIN THE DARKNESS OF RAVEN'S CAPE, HELD STILL BY FORCES UNKNOWN, UNSEEN.

THIRTY SECONDS REMAIN AS THE SECOND BOMB IS ENVELOPED BY THE GREAT EBON CLOAK...



I SENSE THE FINAL BOMB--
GREAT AZAR! ONE LAST
MADMAN, BUT HE HOLDS
HOSTAGES!

ARNIE--
L-LOOK!
WHAT
IS IT?

WHAT IN MARY'S NAME...?
WHAT ARE YOU?

BUT RAVEN DOES NOT
ANSWER THE RHETOR-
ICAL QUESTIONS...



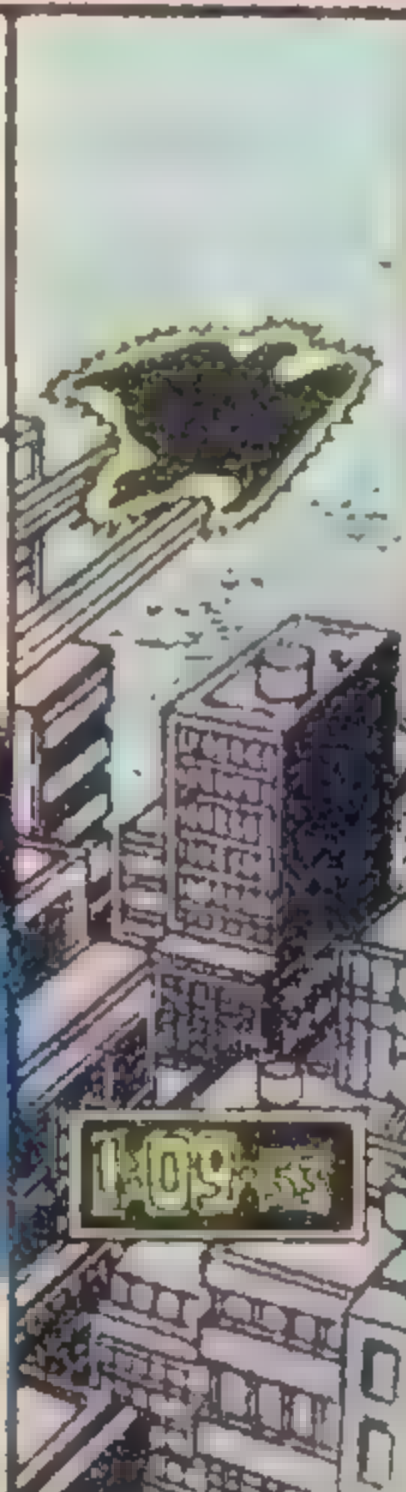
KNOWING
HOW SHORT
TIME NOW
IS...



BUT NOW
THERE IS NO
FEAR IN
RAVEN'S MIND.
INDEED, THERE
IS ONLY AN
INCREDIBLE
CALM AS SHE
RISES FROM
THE VAST
SCHOOL
GROUNDS...



THE HUDSON RIVER IS TO THE WEST,
AND SHE HOVERS ABOVE IT FOR
JUST A LINGERING MOMENT...



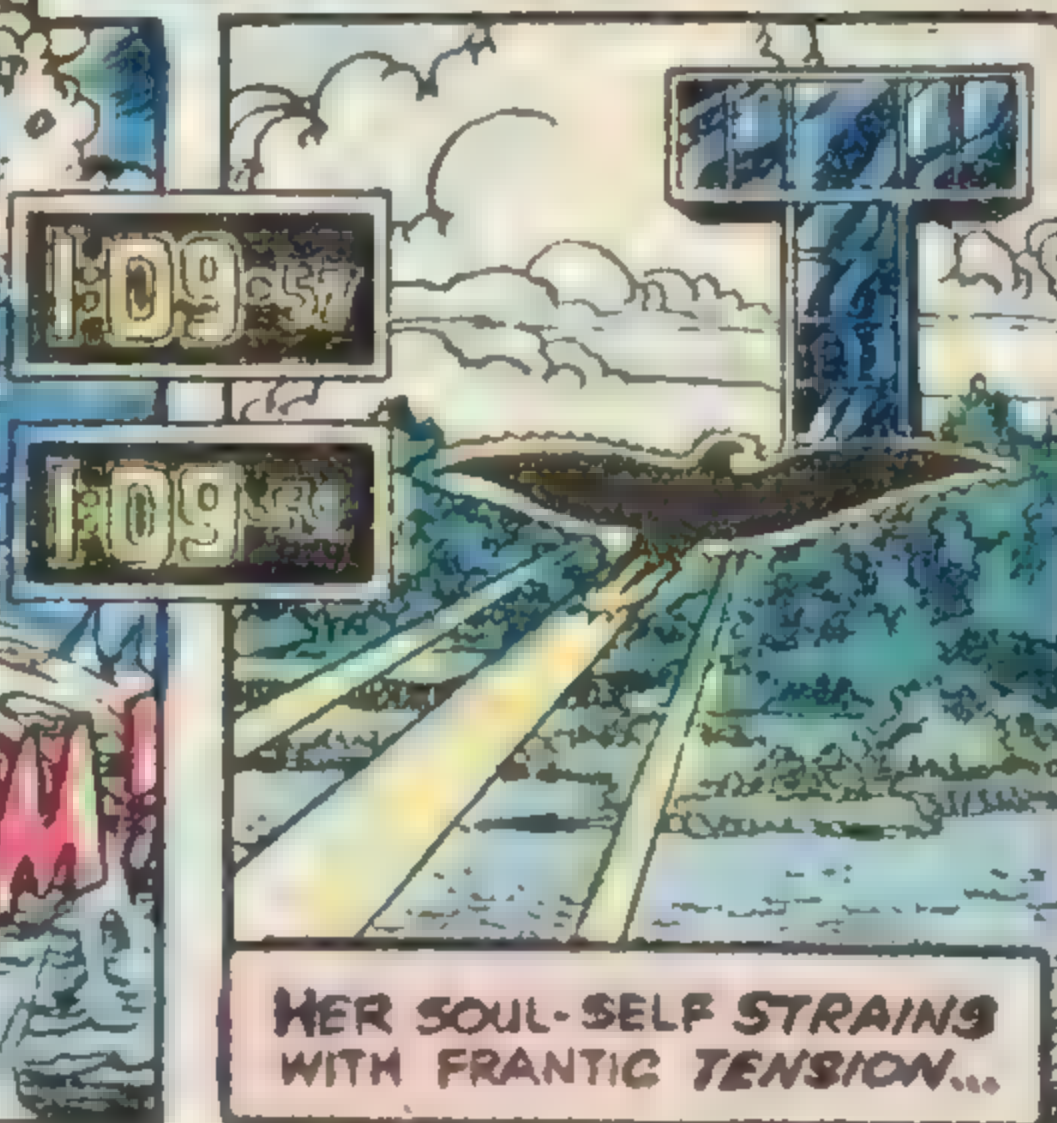
INDEED, SHE MOVES
WITH LIGHTNING-LIKE
SPEED...

...REALIZING THAT, ONCE THE FIVE
MINUTES ARE PAST, SHE WILL BE
SUBJECTED TO TERRORS BEYOND
ANY HUMAN COMPREHENSION...

BEFORE...



ONLY NOW DOES THE FEAR BECOME
KEEN IN HER MIND AS SHE ARCS
ACROSS THE CITY BACK TOWARD
TITANS' TOWER AND HER HUMAN SELF...



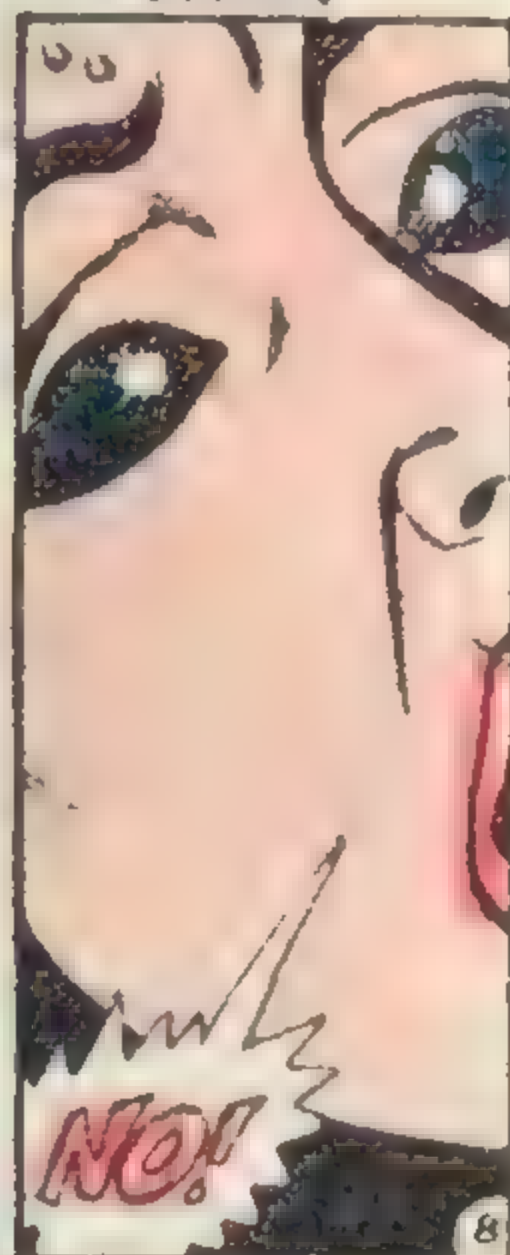
HER SOUL-SELF STRAINS
WITH FRANTIC TENSION...

ONE SECOND
REMAINS.
THE TOWER
LOOMS
BEFORE HER

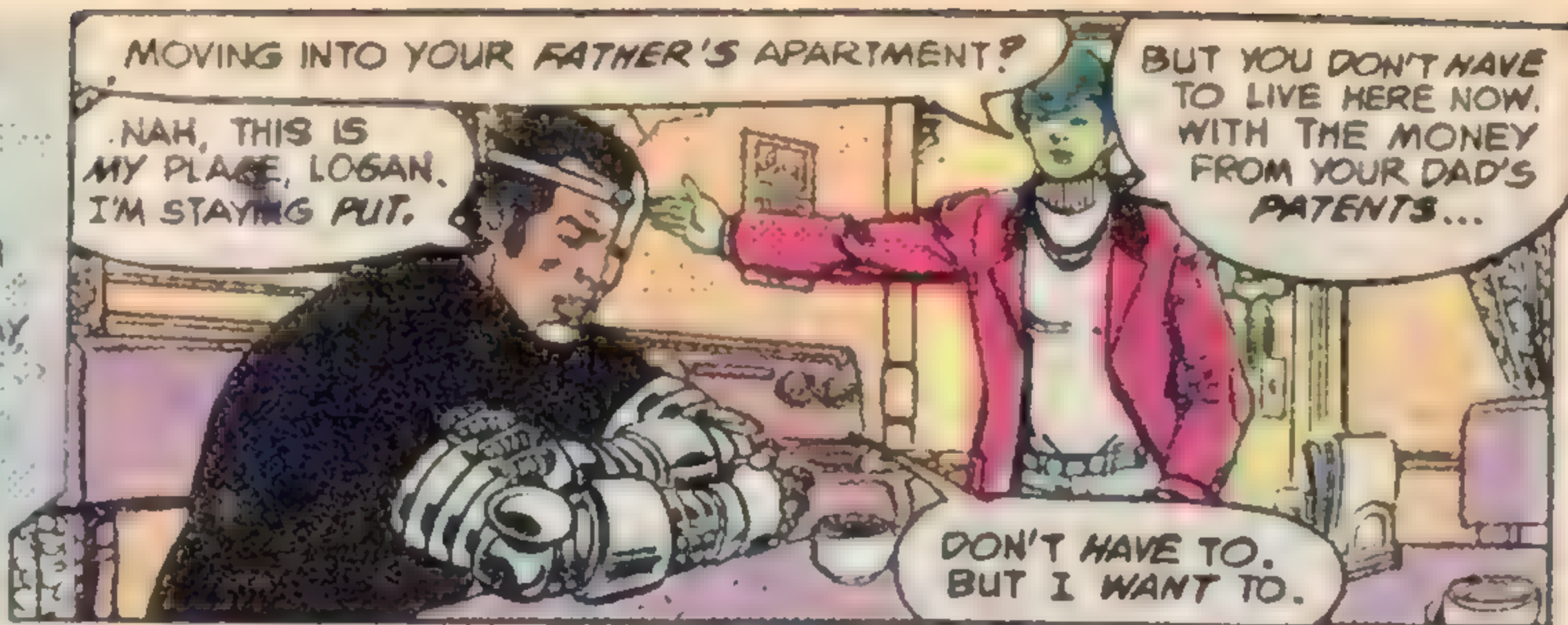
1:09:00

ONE, BRIEF
SECOND

ONE SECOND TOO
LATE.



ELEVENTH AVENUE AND 44TH STREET IS NOT THE FIRST STOP ON THE NEW YORK TOUR BUS ROUTE. JUST BLOCKS AWAY FROM THE GLITTERING LIGHTS OF BROADWAY IT IS A DIRTY, FILTH-RIDDEN REMINDER THAT RICHES AND SQUALOR EXIST SIDE-BY-SIDE EVEN IN THE GREATEST METROPOLIS...



MOVING INTO YOUR FATHER'S APARTMENT?

NAH, THIS IS MY PLACE, LOGAN. I'M STAYING PUT.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE HERE NOW, WITH THE MONEY FROM YOUR DAD'S PATENTS...

DON'T HAVE TO. BUT I WANT TO.

SO, YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GONNA DO NOW, VIC?

WHEN DAD DIED, SOMETHIN' HAPPENED TO ME. Y'KNOW, I HATED BEIN' THIS TIN-PLATED MONSTER HE TURNED ME INTO. WELL, I DON'T HATE IT ANY MORE.

BUT I GOTTA START REBUILDIN' MY LIFE NOW. FIGGER OUT WHAT I'M GONNA DO WITH MYSELF.

YEAH, VIC STONE HERE. WHO IS IT?

OOHHH... LOGAN, IT'S FOR YOU.

AHH, THE EVER-PRESENT VERNON QUESTOR, MY STEP-FATHER'S BUSINESS MANAGER...



YET, THIS POVERTY-TORN DISTRICT OF DESPAIR IS THE HOME AS WELL OF VICTOR STONE, ALSO KNOWN AS CYBORG OF THE NEW TEEN TITANS...



DON'T REALLY HATE ANYTHIN' ANY MORE.



AW, WHO'S CALLIN' NOW? PROBABLY SOMEONE TRYIN' TO SELL ME SOMETHIN'.



SOME GUY WHO TALKS THROUGH HIS NOSE.



YEAH, WHAT IS IT, QUESTOR? THIS IS GAR LOGAN.

BUT, IN THE HAMPTONS' ESTATE OF STEVE DAYTON, THE FIFTH RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD...

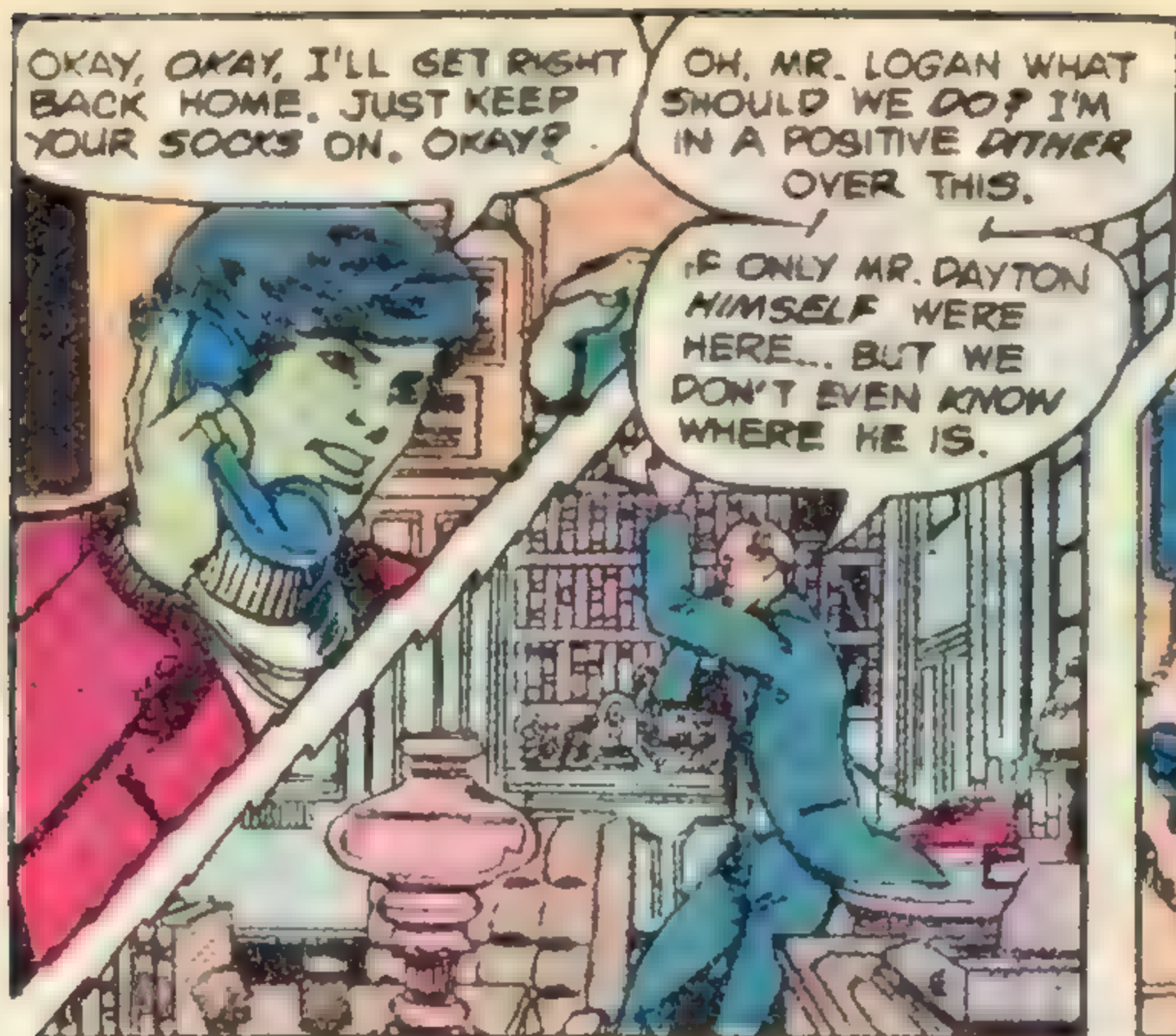
MR. LOGAN, I ASSURE YOU THIS IS AN EMERGENCY, ONE THAT REQUIRES YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION.

THAT MAKES TWO BOARD MEMBERS OF DAYTON INDUSTRIES IN TWO DAYS, SIR.

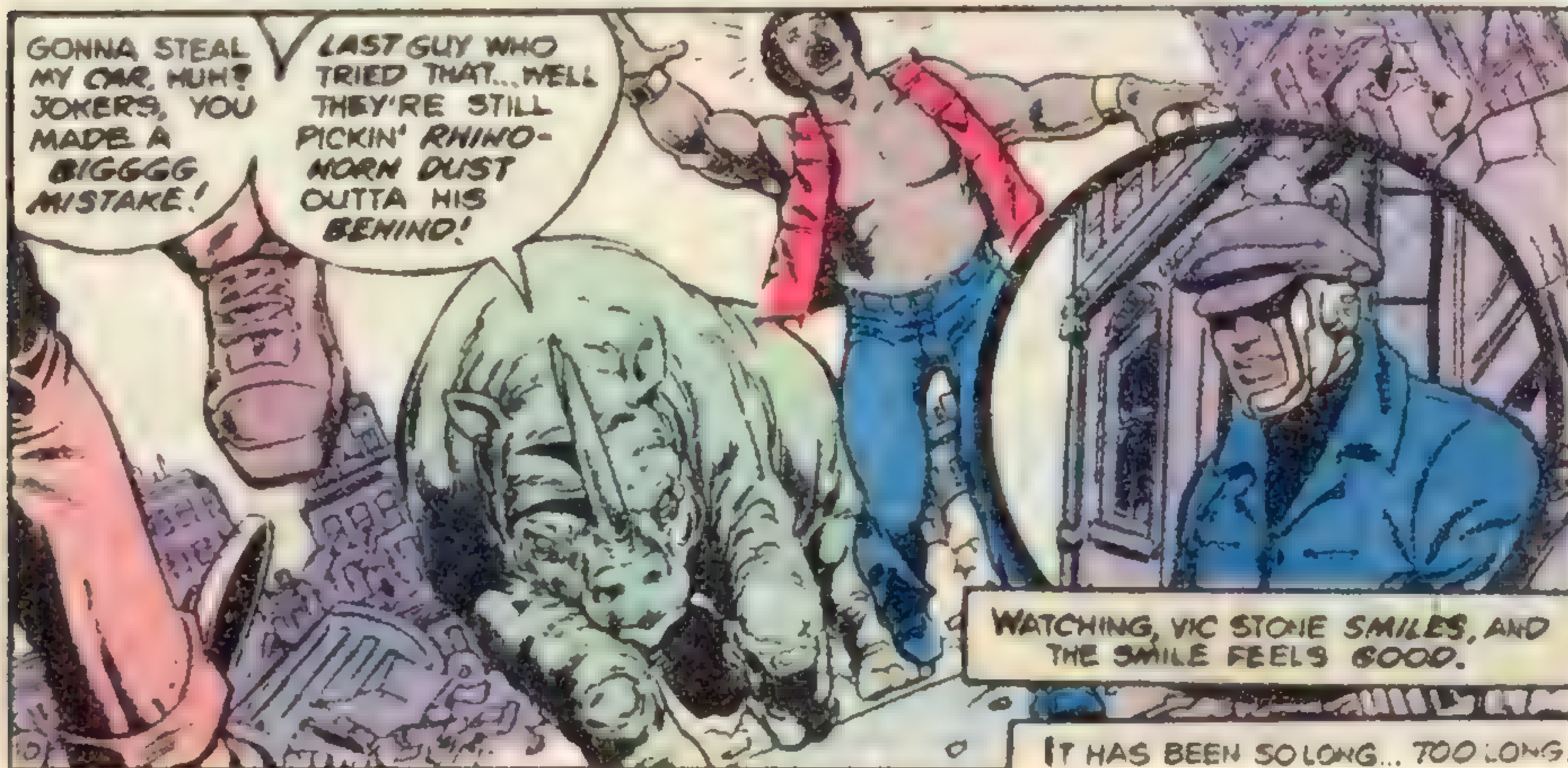
I FEAR, SIR, THAT SOMETHING IS VERY MUCH AFOUL!

LISSEN, IF THIS IS ABOUT SIGNING SOME MORE STUPID PAPERS, WELL YOU CAN --

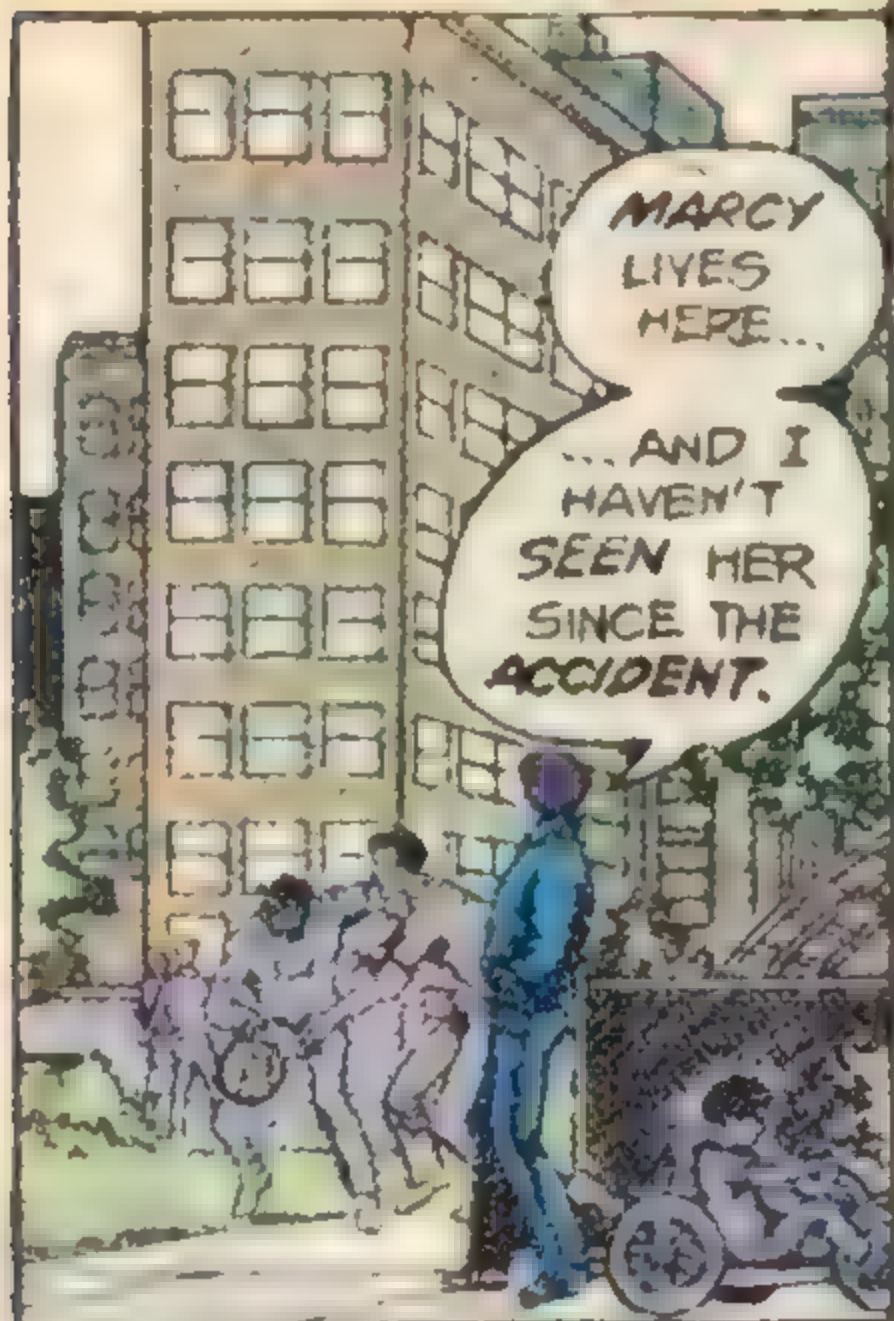
IT'S ABSOLUTELY AWFUL, MR. LOGAN. SOREN WINSLOW WAS JUST SHOT TO DEATH, SIR.



BUT, DIRECTLY OUTSIDE VIC STONE'S APARTMENT HOUSE...

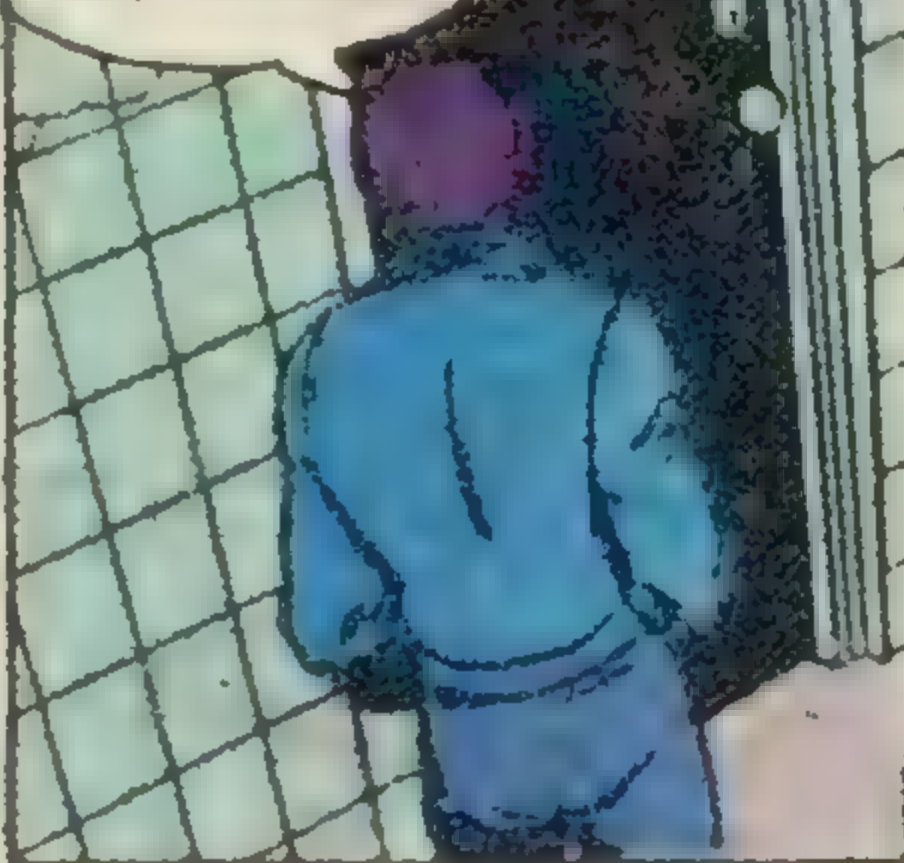


HE WALKS THEN, UPTOWN FOR A WHILE, THINKING, WONDERING, DECIDING. THEN...



USED TO BE REAL CLOSE, BUT THOSE DAYS SEEM LIKE THEY WERE CENTURIES IN THE PAST.

SHE'S PROBABLY GOT HERSELF A NEW GUY, BUT, MAYBE...



TIMIDLY, VIC STONE KNOCKS ON THE APARTMENT DOOR. A FEW SECONDS PASS SLOWLY BY, THEN...

WHO IS--? Y-VICTOR?

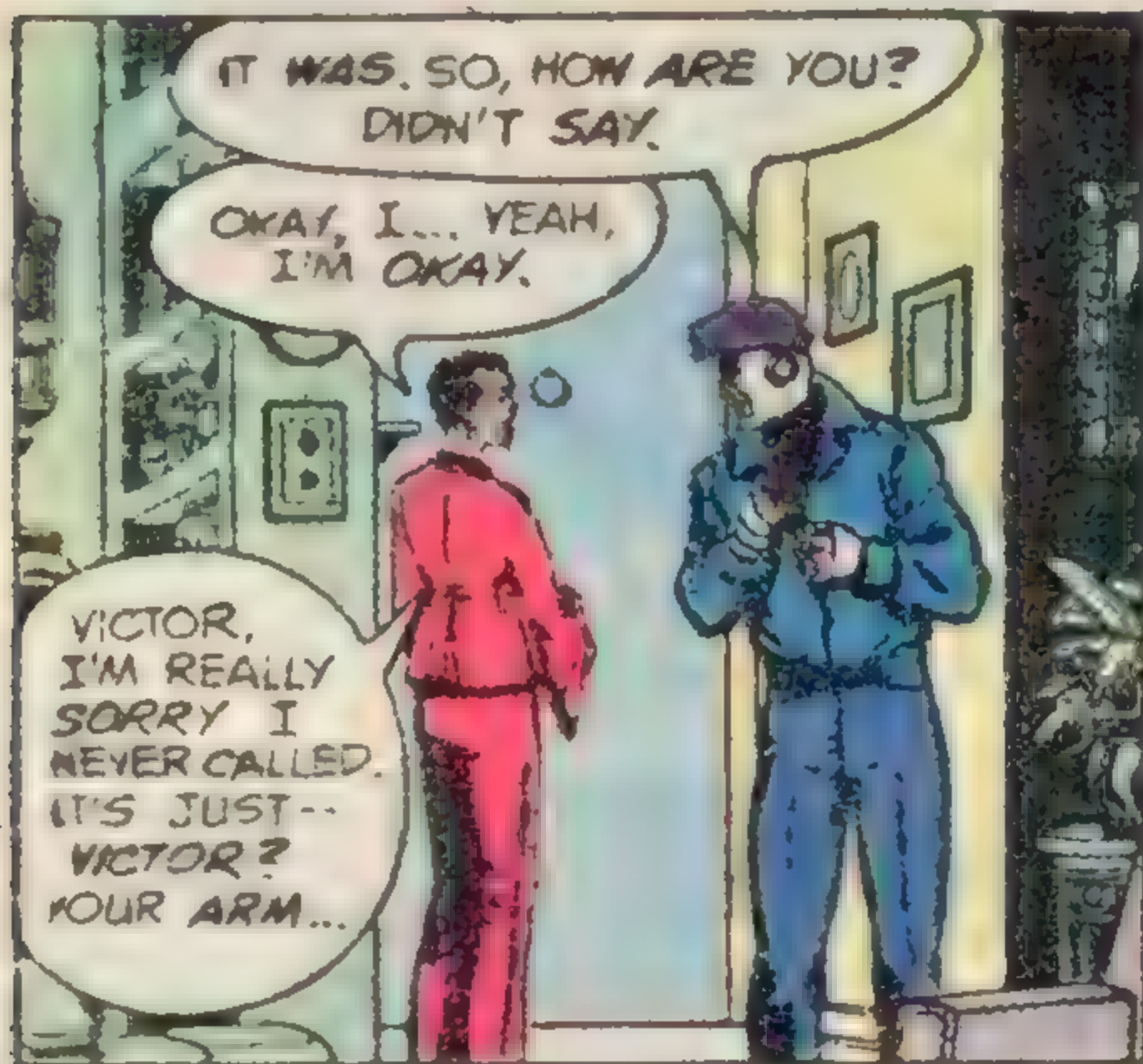
YEAH, HI, MARCY. HOW ARE YOU?



IT WAS. SO, HOW ARE YOU? DIDN'T SAY.

OKAY, I... YEAH, I'M OKAY.

VICTOR, I'M REALLY SORRY I NEVER CALLED. IT'S JUST-- VICTOR? YOUR ARM...



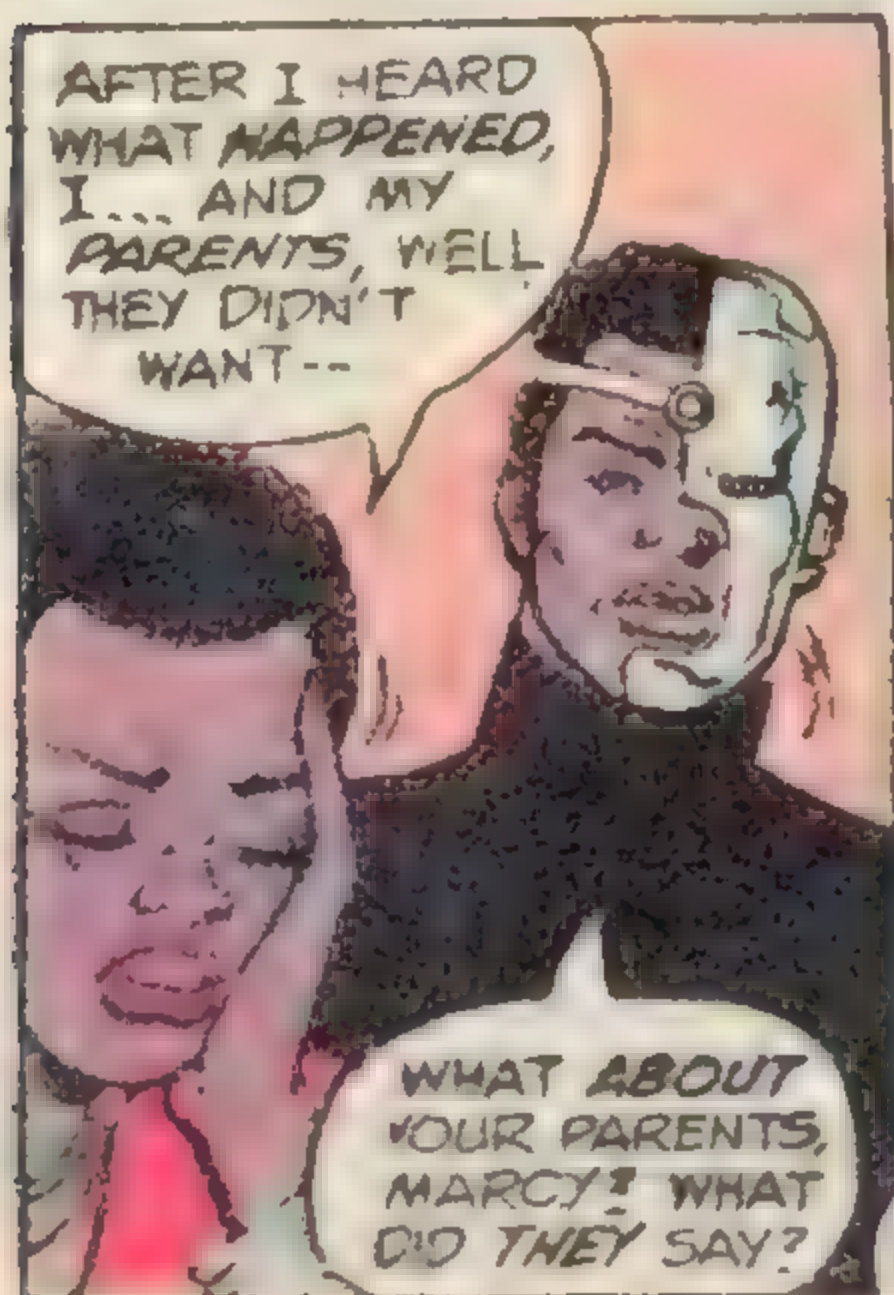
THEN, WHAT I HEARD... IT'S TRUE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL, MARCY? I MEAN, IT WAS REAL SERIOUS BETWEEN US, AND THEN...



AFTER I HEARD WHAT HAPPENED, I... AND MY PARENTS, WELL THEY DIDN'T WANT--

WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS, MARCY? WHAT DID THEY SAY?



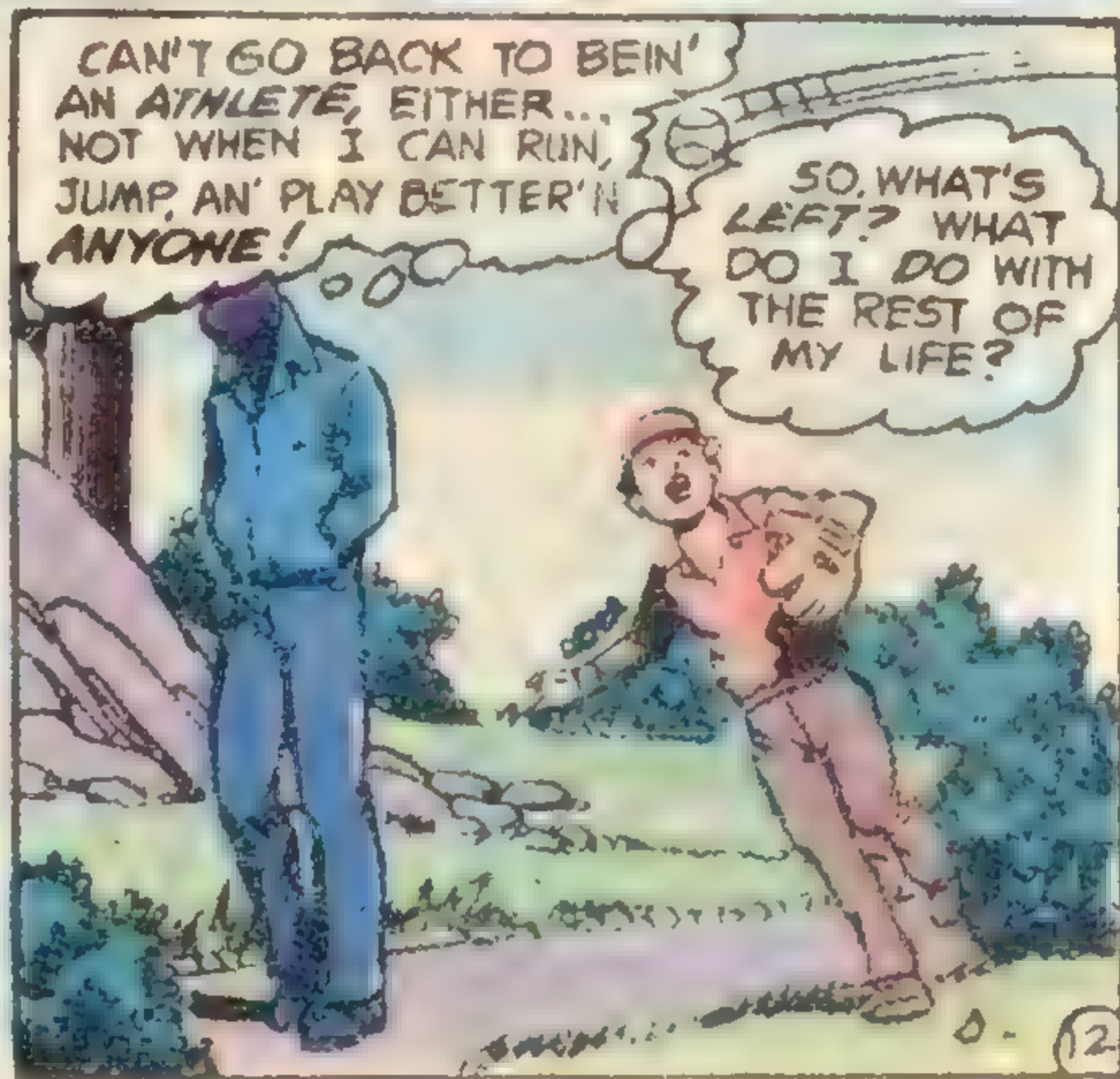
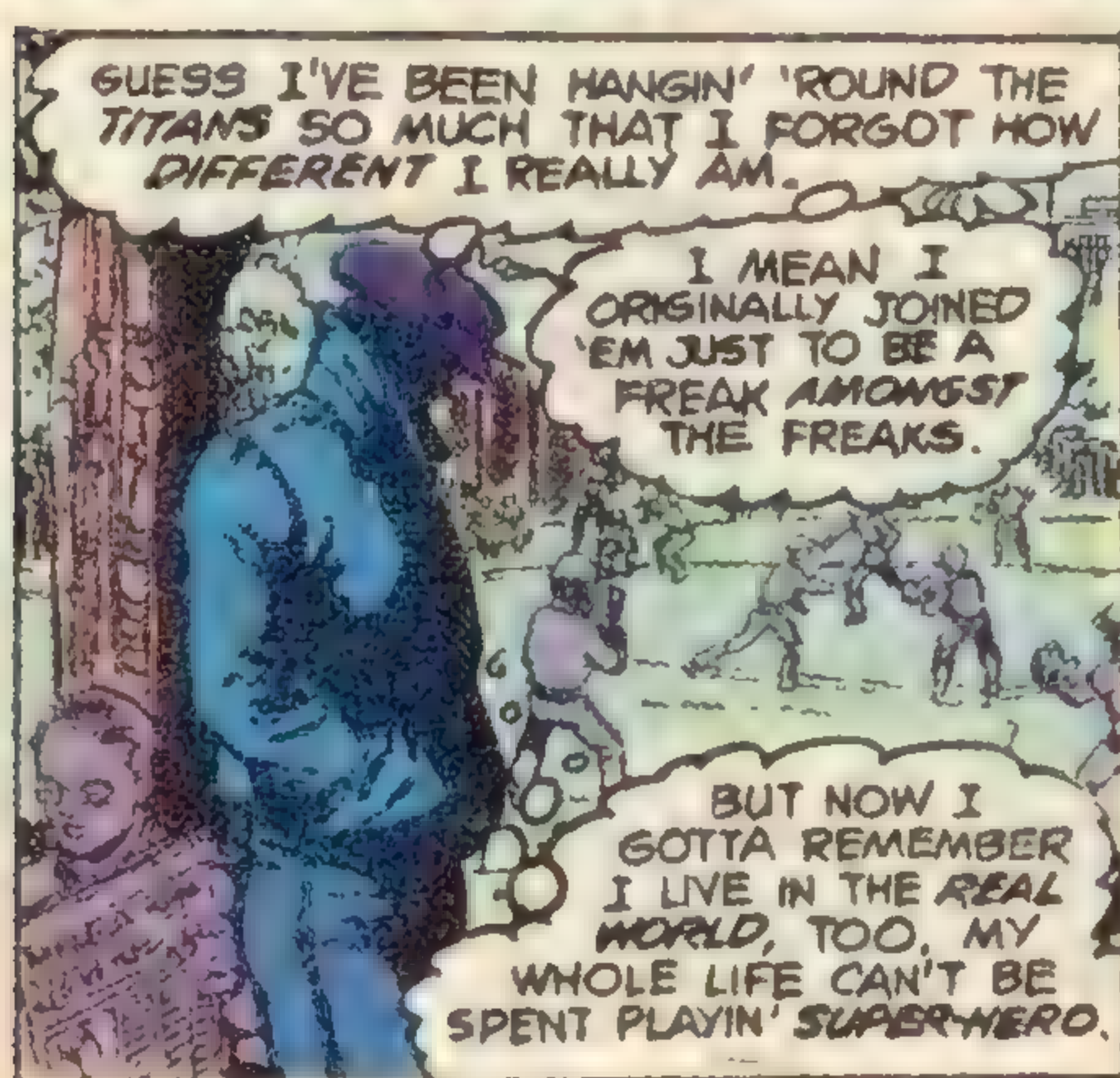
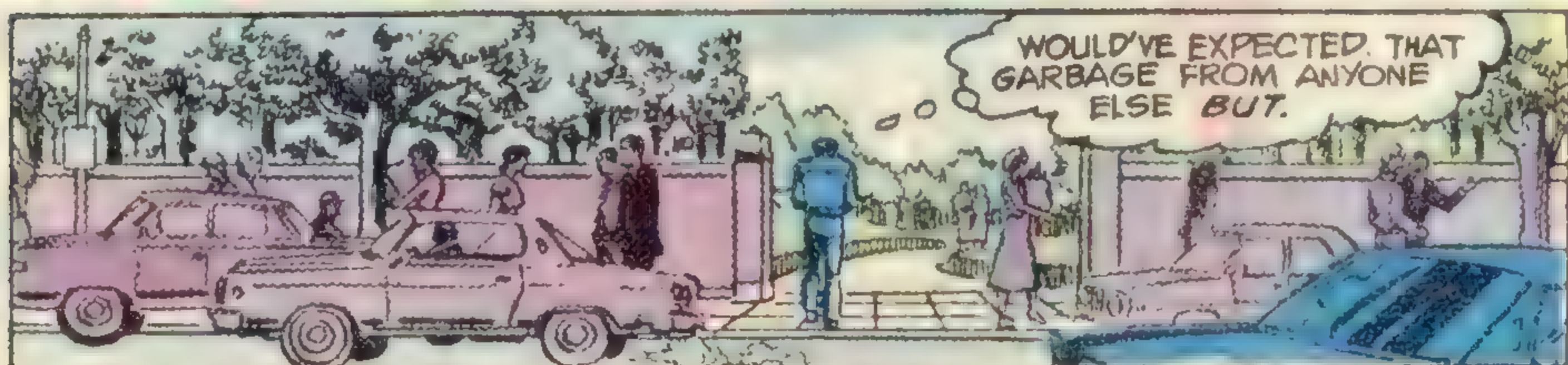
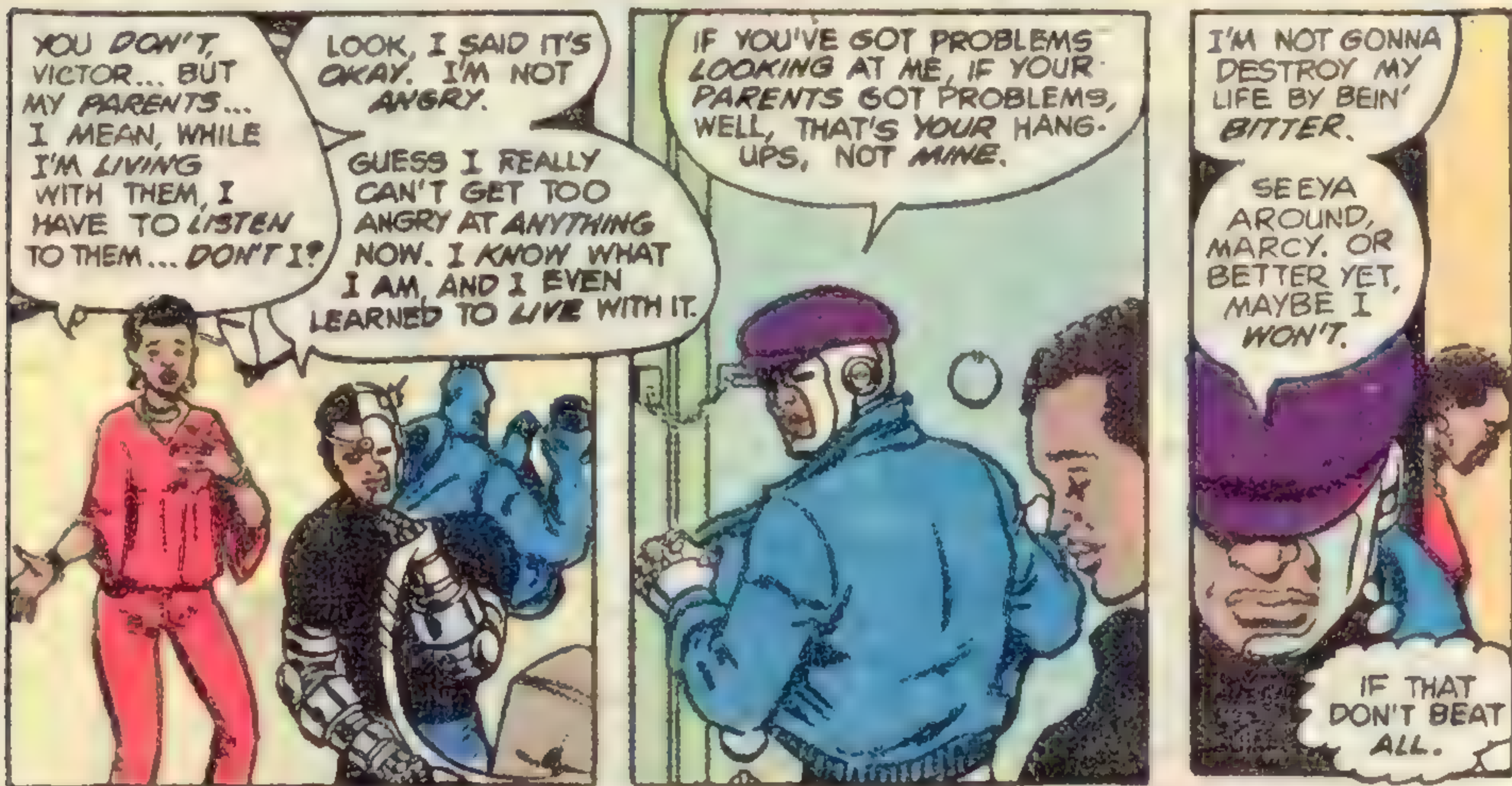
Y-YOUR FACE!! VICTOR, MY GOD, OH, MY GOD.

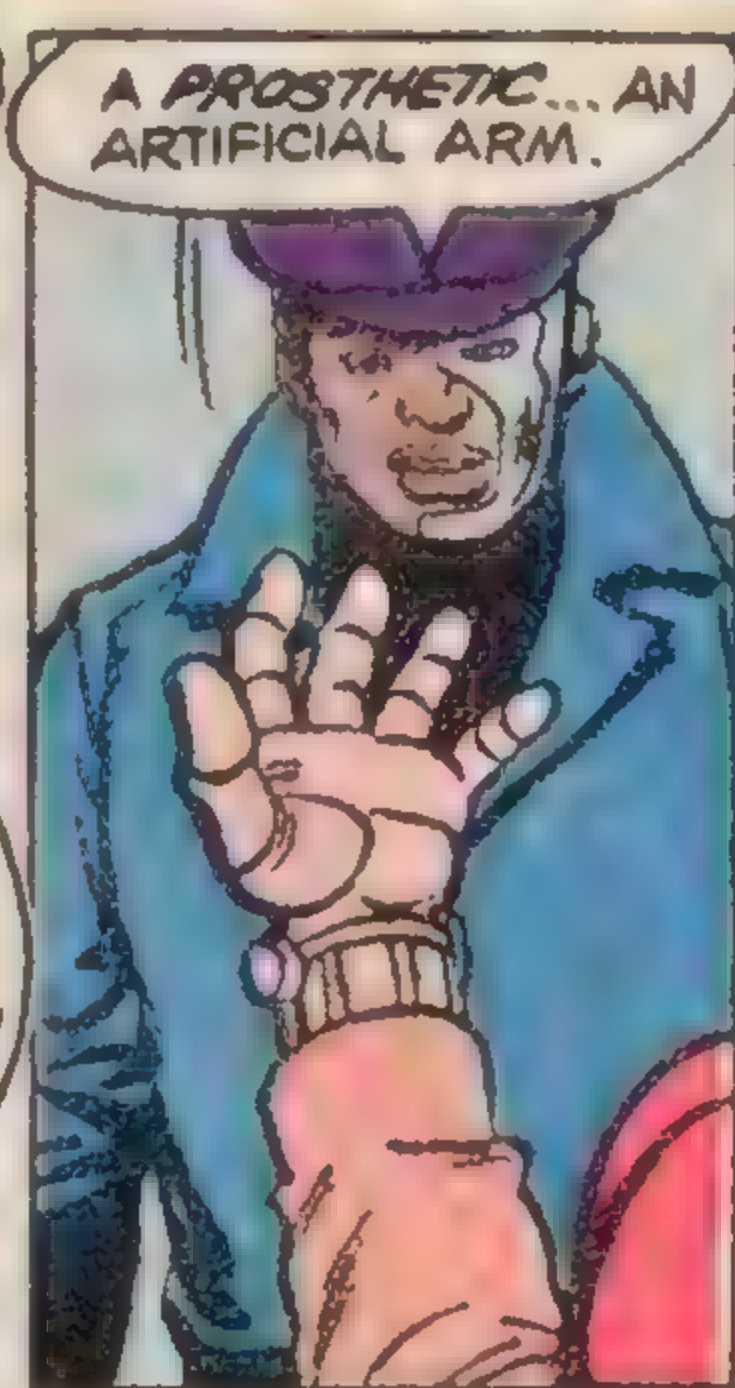
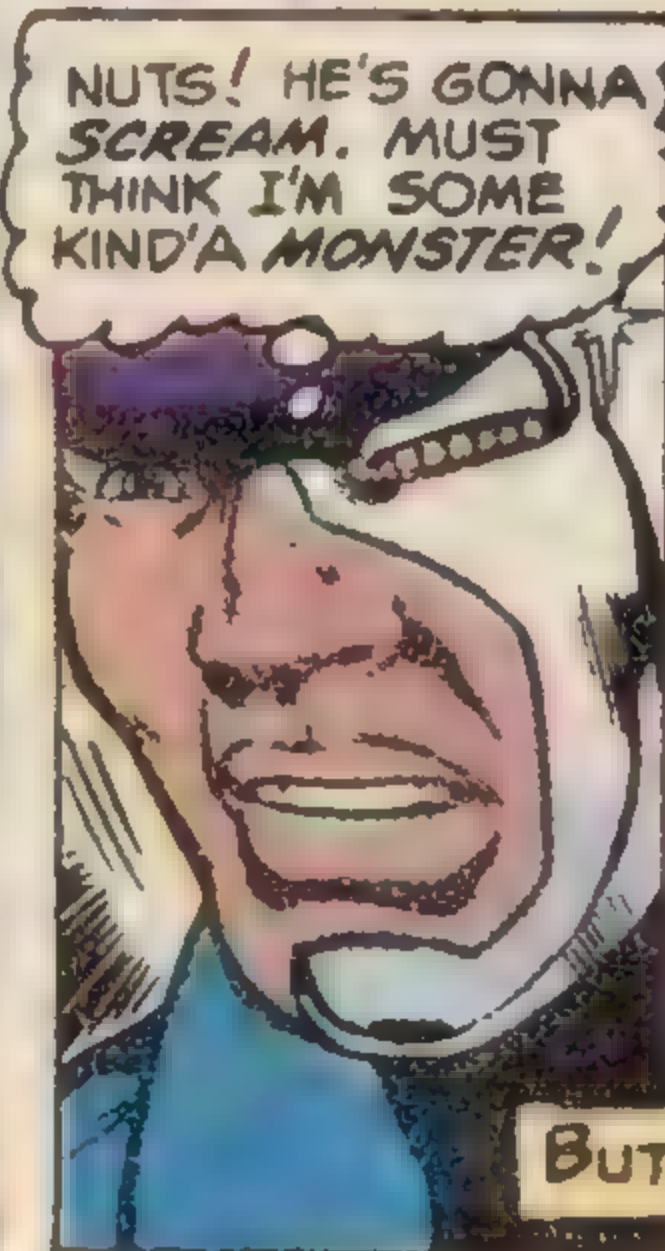
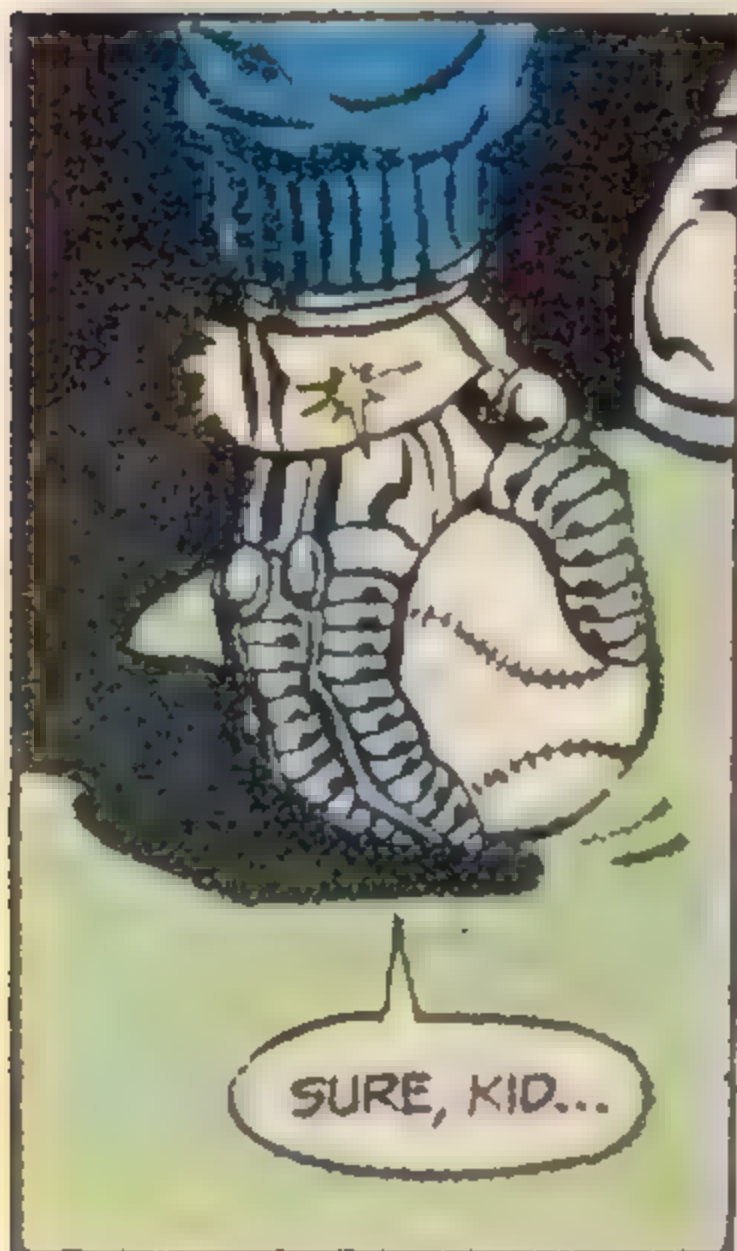
VICTOR, PLEASE UNDERSTAND... MY MOM SAID SHE SAW YOU ON THE STREET... SHE TOLD ME SHE DIDN'T WANT ME TO EVER SEE YOU AGAIN.

WHY DID YOU COME BACK HERE, VICTOR? DIDN'T YOU KNOW THINGS COULDN'T BE THE SAME AGAIN?

GOD, VICTOR... WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST DYE, OR...







I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN. BUT YOU STILL SHOULDN'T BOTHER STRANGERS.

SO, WHO'S A STRANGER? MY NAME'S VIC STONE.



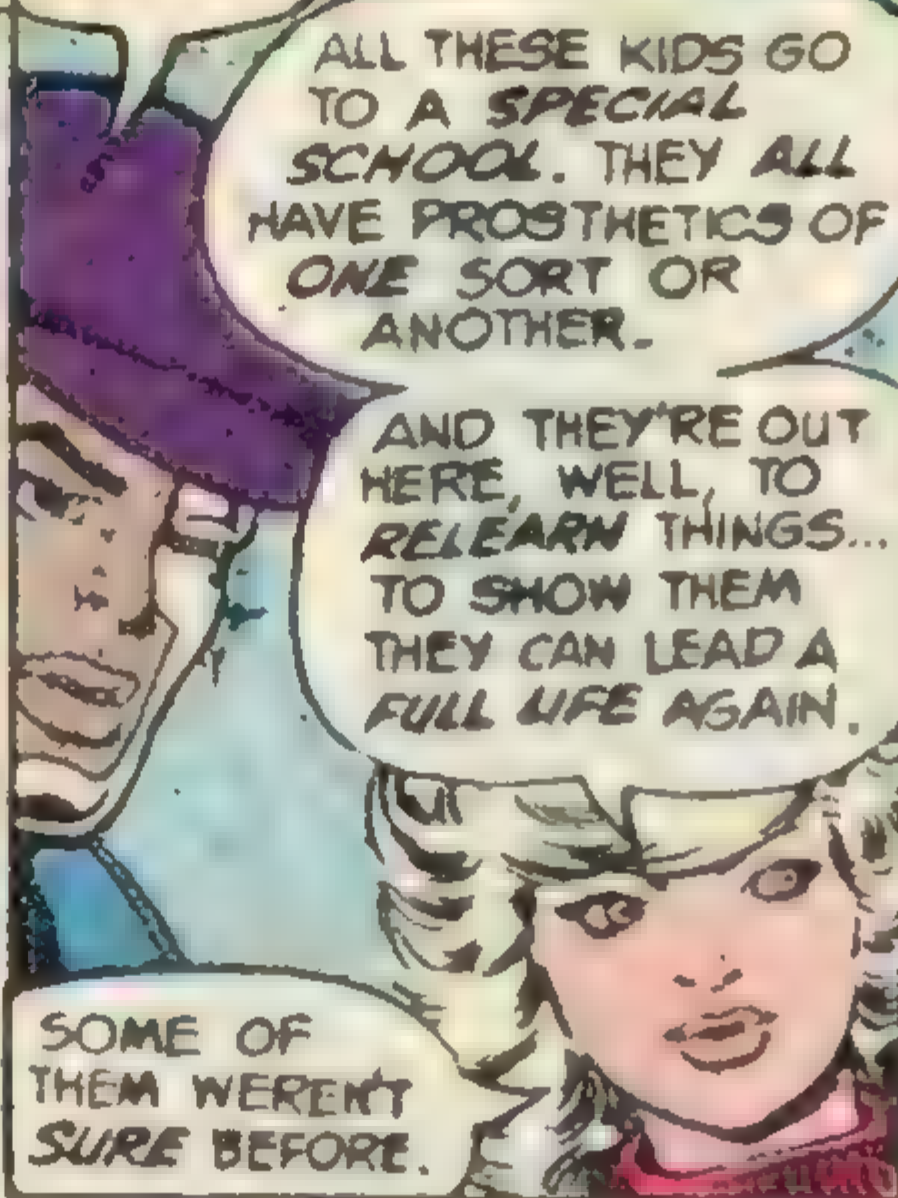
AND I'M SARAN SIMMS, THEIR TEACHER.

TEACHER? I DON'T GET IT?

ALL THESE KIDS GO TO A SPECIAL SCHOOL. THEY ALL HAVE PROSTHETICS OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER.

AND THEY'RE OUT HERE, WELL, TO RELEARN THINGS... TO SHOW THEM THEY CAN LEAD A FULL LIFE AGAIN.

SOME OF THEM WEREN'T SURE BEFORE.



BUT NOW, THEY'RE LEARNING, ALMOST FORGETTING THEIR PROBLEMS.

MISS SIMMS, C'N HE PLAY WITH US? C'N HE, C'N HE?



KIDS, HE'S PROBABLY VERY BUSY, AND...

BUSY? MISS SIMMS, SOMEHOW I DON'T THINK I GOT ANYTHIN' MORE IMPORTANT TO DO THAN PLAY SOME BALL.

MAN, NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY THAT AGAIN.

SO YOU SIT DOWN AN' RELAX.



ME? I'M ABOUT TO HAVE SOME LONG OVERDUE FUN!

C'MON, YOU CRUMMY KIDS-- LAST ONE TO THE DIAMOND'S A LOUSY IMPERIAL STORMTROOPER!



ELSEWHERE...

FIRST DARKNESS. THICKER AND DEEPER THAN THE BLACKEST BLACK. THEN, SUDDENLY, MAD COLORS, SWIRLING, WHIRLING, WRENCHING FORMS AND SHAPES. COLD, THEN HOT, THEN COLD AGAIN.

IT IS INSANITY GONE ONE FURTHER STEP INSANE.



SHE FEELS THE SENSATIONS LONG BEFORE THE OBSCENE MONSTROUSITIES ARE VISUALLY BURNED INTO HER MIND...

SHE RESISTS, FIGHTING, CLAWING, BUT THE SENSATIONS ARE EVERYWHERE AND THEY PRESS SO HEAVILY UPON HER WRITHING FLESH...

SHE DIVES LOW TO AVOID THE OMNIPRESENT ICY HANDS...

AGAIN SHE IS BROUGHT DOWN, TUMBLING WILDLY TOWARD THE GREAT FRANGIBLE GLASS-LIKE MEMBRANE WHICH FLOATS CALMLY IN THE DIMENSIONAL SEAS SO VERY FAR BELOW...

BUT, THE COLD ABRUPTLY ENDS.



COLD CARESSES HER WITH FEARSOME, FRIGID FINGERS, PULLING AT HER, CLUTCHING AT HER, TUGGING HER DOWN, DOWN, EVER DOWN...

COLD SO KEEN, SO PAINFUL, IT IS LIKE AN ARCTIC HOARFROST.

HEAT FROM DEEP WITHIN GROUND THAT HAD NOT EXISTED EVEN A MOMENT BEFORE SUDDENLY RUSHES UP TO BLANKET HER. HER SKIN HARDENS, TENSES AS BOILING WATERS HOLD HER IN AN INESCAPABLE GRIP.

SHE TRIES RESISTING, BUT ANY FIGHT IS USELESS NOW.

IN A MOMENT SHE IS PULLED THROUGH, SHATTERING THE BOUNDS OF REALITIES...

AND, AS SHE IS DRAWN ALONG, PUSHED FURTHER INTO THE DEPTHS, RHYTHMIC PULSES OF HEAT, THEN COLD, THEN HEAT AGAIN LURE HER ON HER HEADLONG PLUNGE...

UNCONSCIOUSNESS PHASES IN AND OUT AS SHE IS HELPLESSLY DRAGGED ALONG BY THE OTHER-DIMENSIONAL UNDERTOW.

THE FIRST SENSATIONS FADE NOW, HER JANGLED THOUGHTS RETURN AS SHE SPIES THE SWIRLING WIND-TUNNEL DRAWING HER DEEPER, EVER DEEPER TOWARD SOME PHANTOM LIGHT SO VERY FAR AWAY.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THESE BOTH PAINFUL AND PLEASURABLE MOMENTS, RAVEN CAN THINK...

IS THIS WHAT OCCURS WHEN I EXCEED THAT FIVE MINUTE LIMIT?

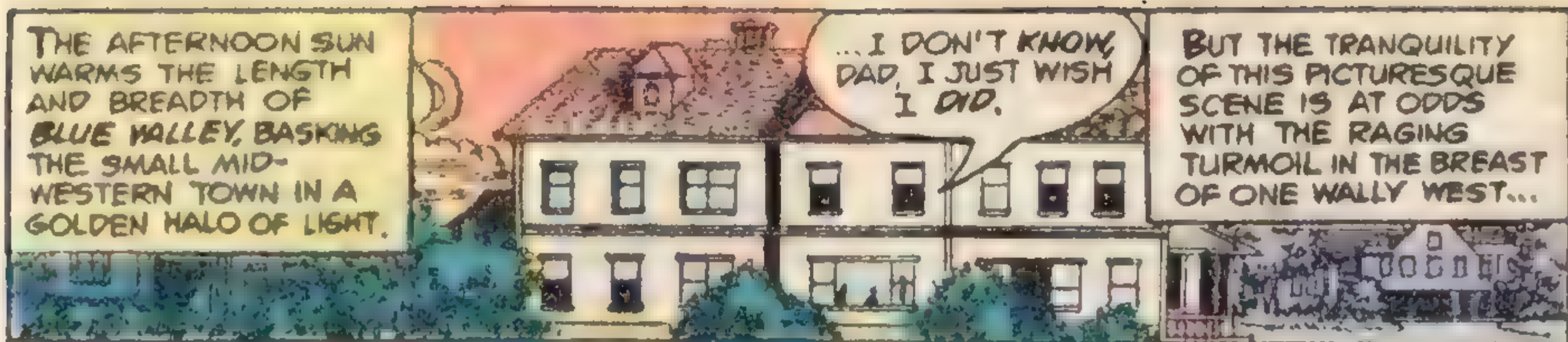
NO! THIS IS ANOTHER DIMENSION, ONE TRYING TO DESTROY MY SOUL...

...PREVENTING ME FROM REJOINING MY HUMAN SELF!

BUT I MUST RE-FORM OR BE LOST FOREVER IN THIS ETERNAL INSANITY!

I'VE BEEN THRUST INTO A WORLD GONE MAD --OR...

SHE CONTINUES FLOATING DOWN TOWARD THE WARM NIMBUS OF BURNING ENERGY.



THE AFTERNOON SUN WARMS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF BLUE VALLEY, BASKING THE SMALL MID-WESTERN TOWN IN A GOLDEN HALO OF LIGHT.

...I DON'T KNOW, DAD, I JUST WISH I DID.

BUT THE TRANQUILITY OF THIS PICTURESQUE SCENE IS AT ODDS WITH THE RAGING TURMOIL IN THE BREAST OF ONE WALLY WEST...

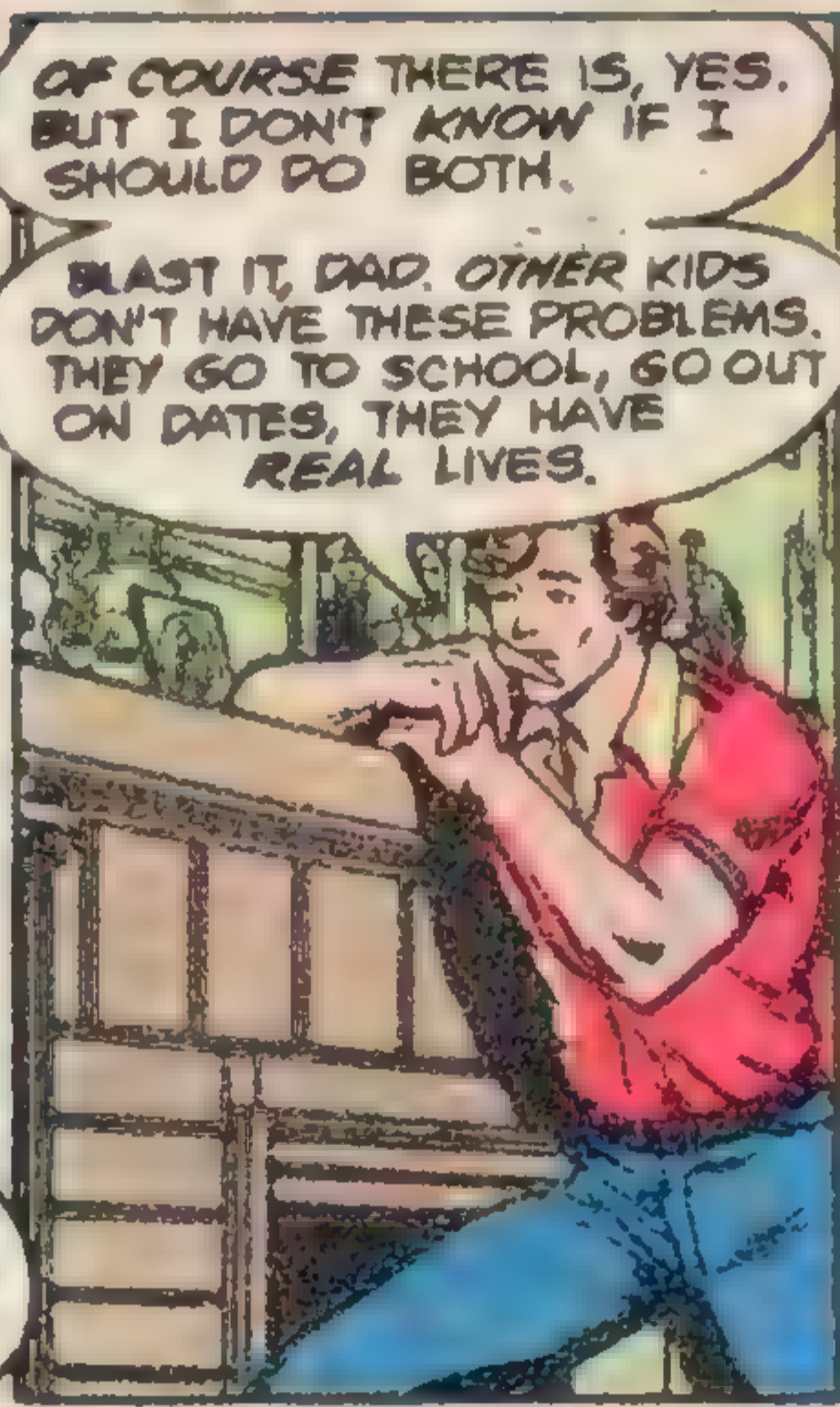


I ENJOY BEING A SUPER-HERO, I DO...

...BUT I REALLY WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE.

I WISH I COULD HELP YOU, SON, BUT THIS HAS GOT TO BE YOUR CHOICE.

IS THERE A WAY YOU CAN DO BOTH?



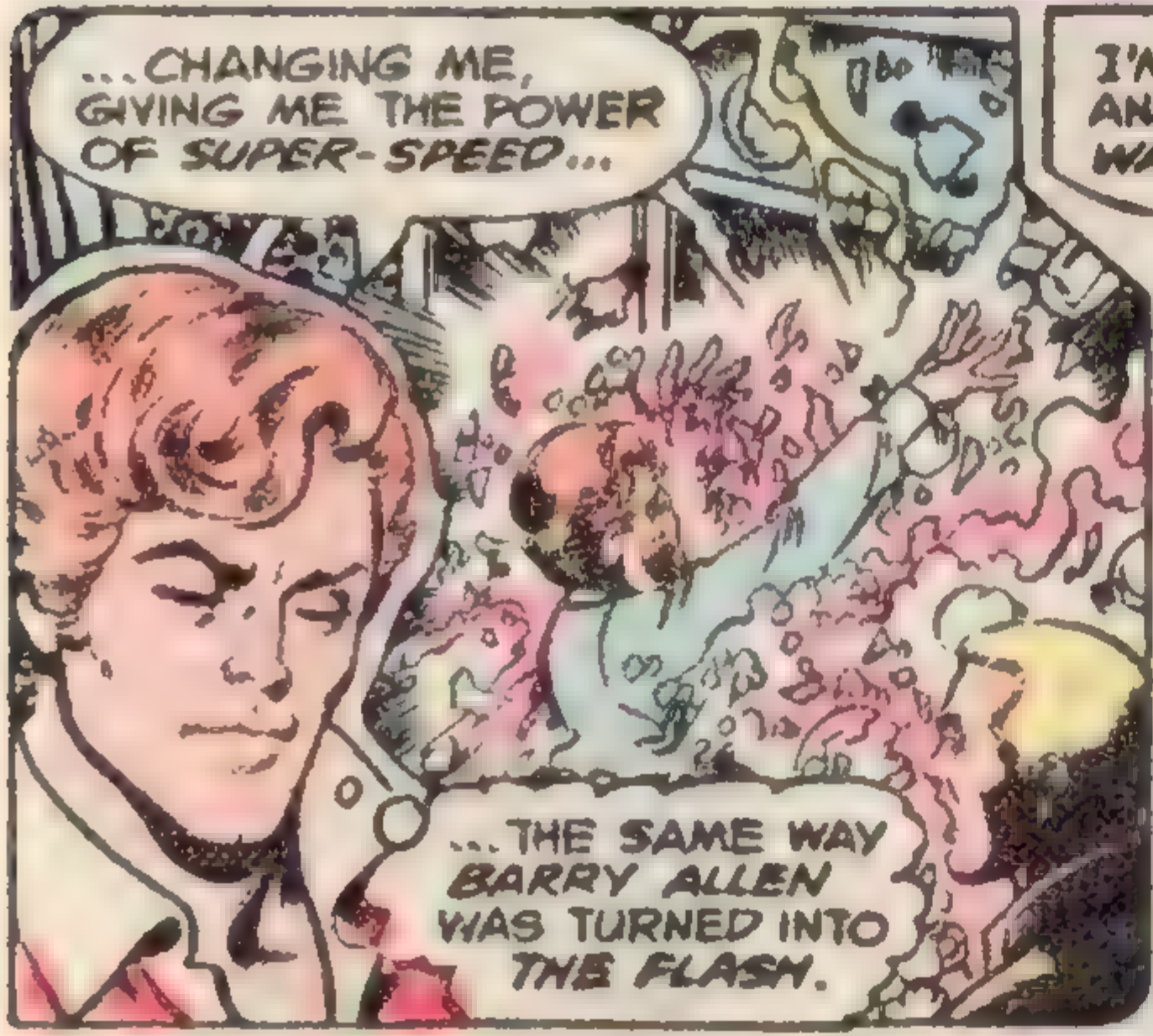
OF COURSE THERE IS, YES. BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD DO BOTH.

BLAST IT, DAD. OTHER KIDS DON'T HAVE THESE PROBLEMS. THEY GO TO SCHOOL, GO OUT ON DATES, THEY HAVE REAL LIVES.



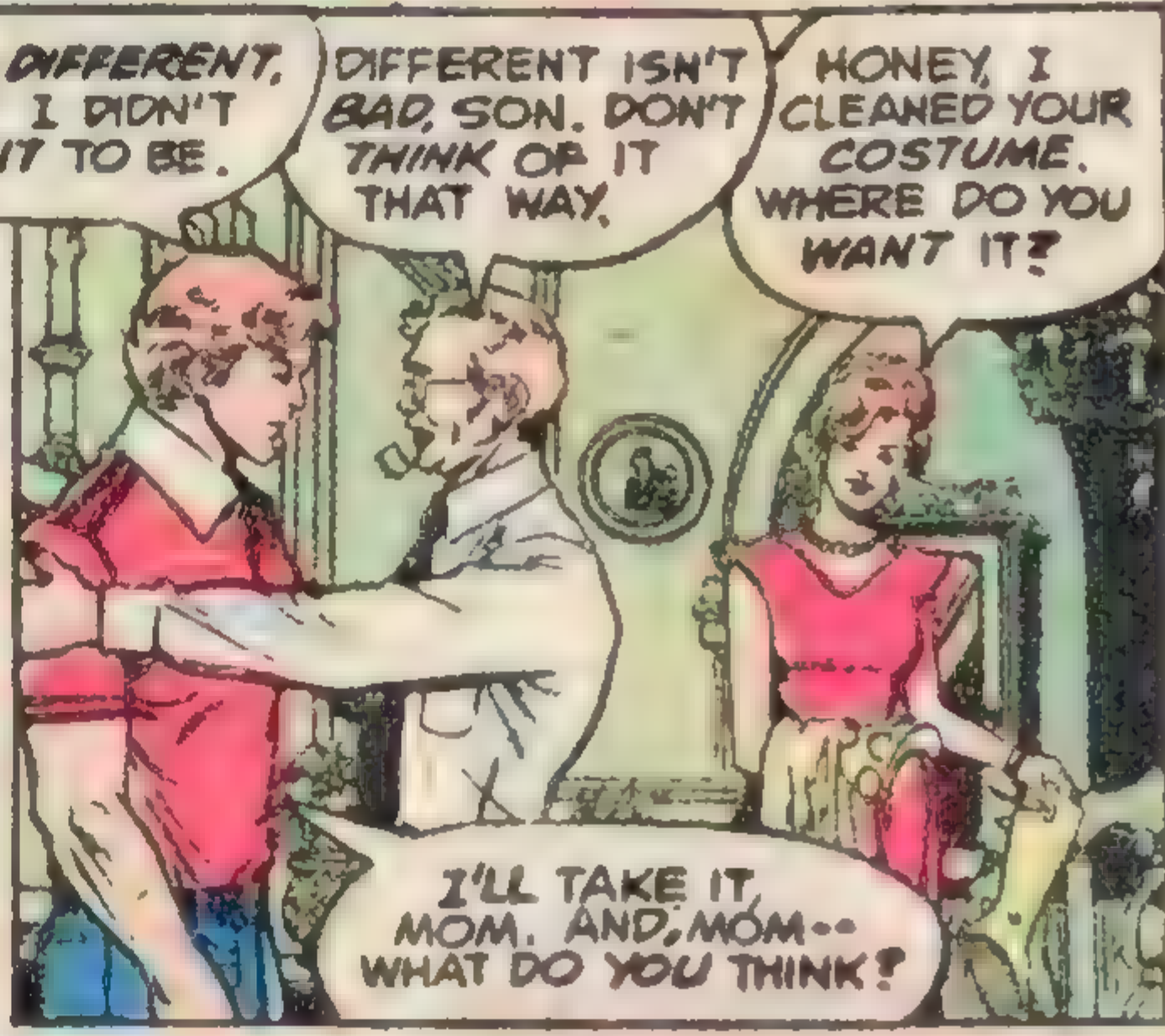
BUT NOT ME, NO, SIR. I'M NOT THAT LUCKY. I DIDN'T ASK TO BE SPECIAL...

DIDN'T ASK TO HAVE LIGHTNING SPILL ALL THOSE CHEMICALS OVER ME...



...CHANGING ME, GIVING ME THE POWER OF SUPER-SPEED...

...THE SAME WAY BARRY ALLEN WAS TURNED INTO THE FLASH.



I'M DIFFERENT, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO BE.

DIFFERENT ISN'T BAD, SON. DON'T THINK OF IT THAT WAY.

HONEY, I CLEANED YOUR COSTUME. WHERE DO YOU WANT IT?

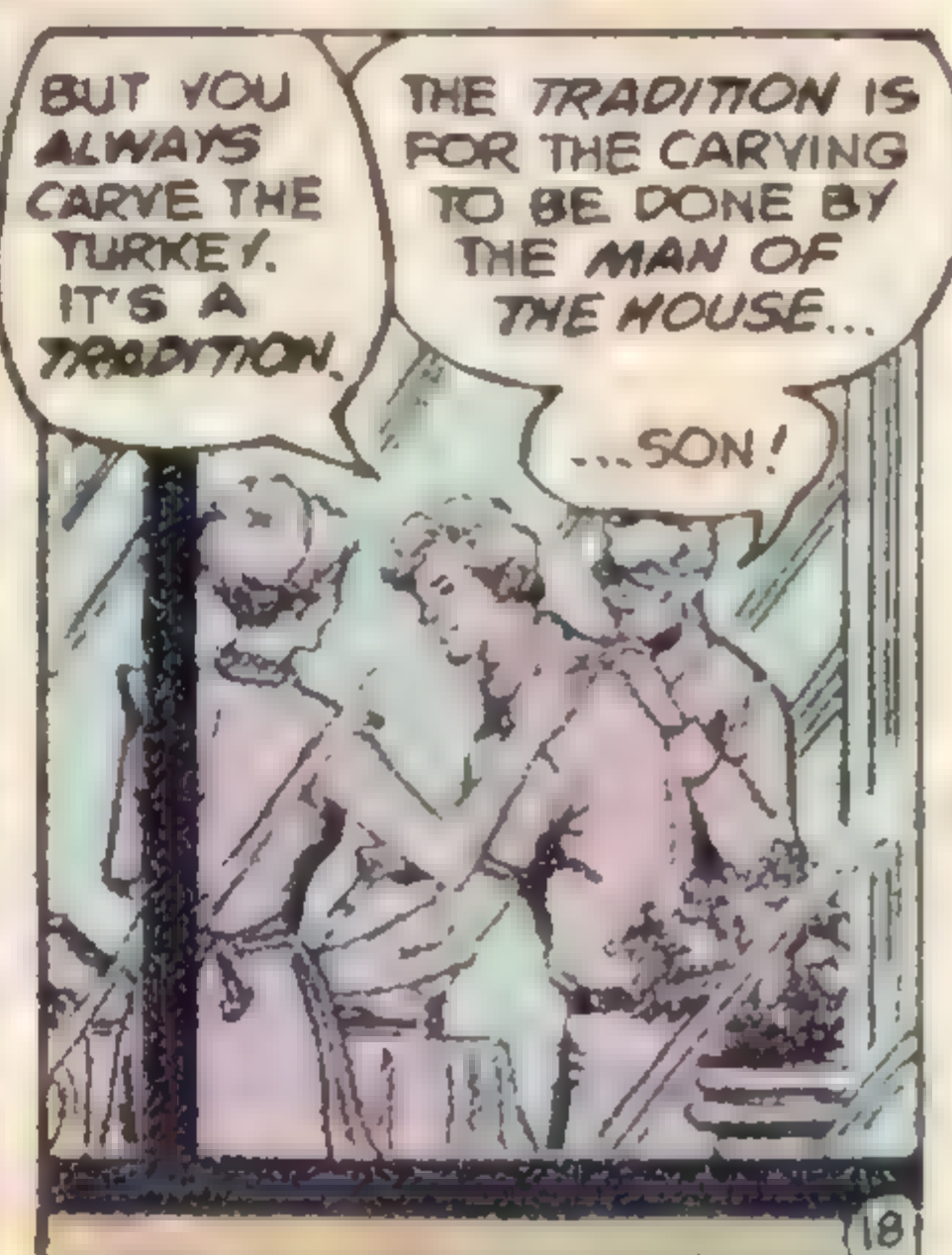
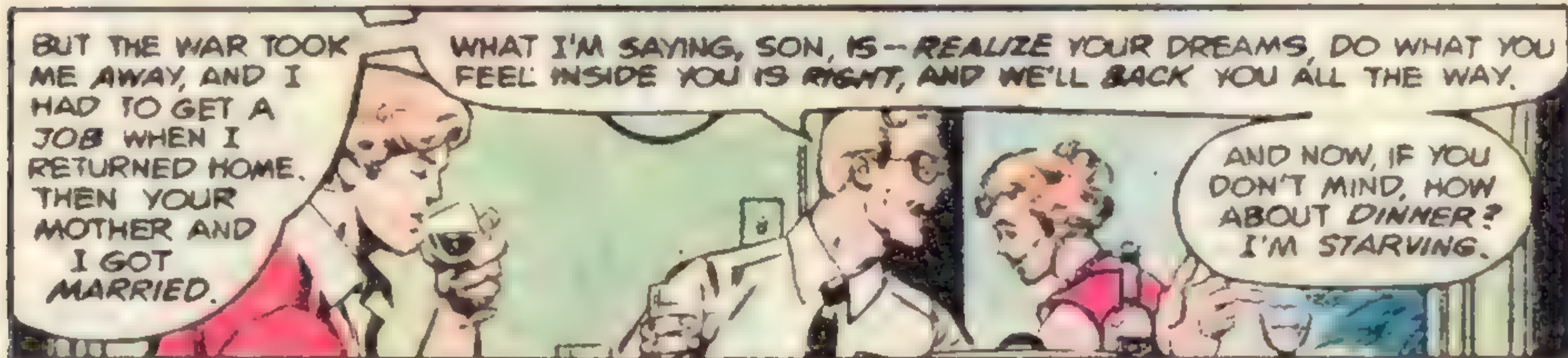
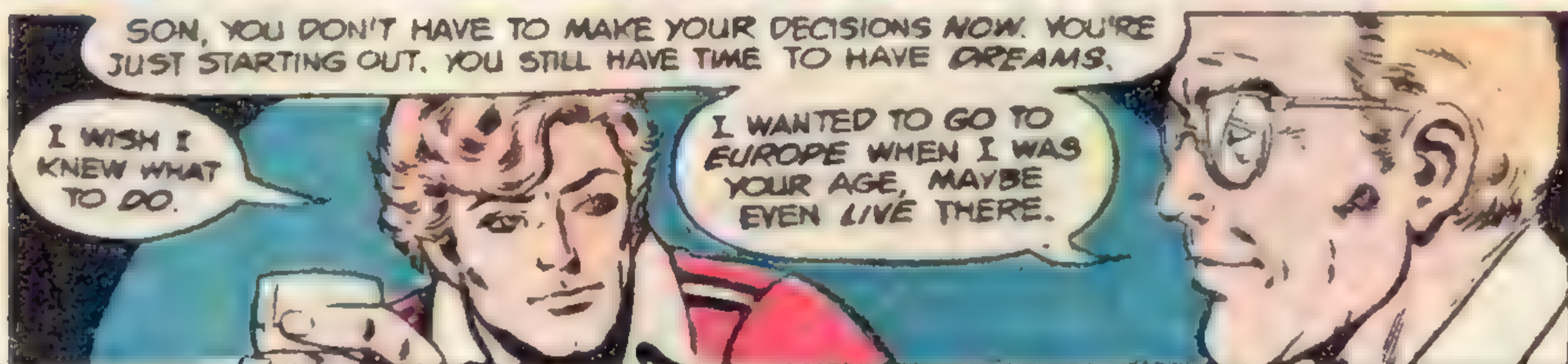
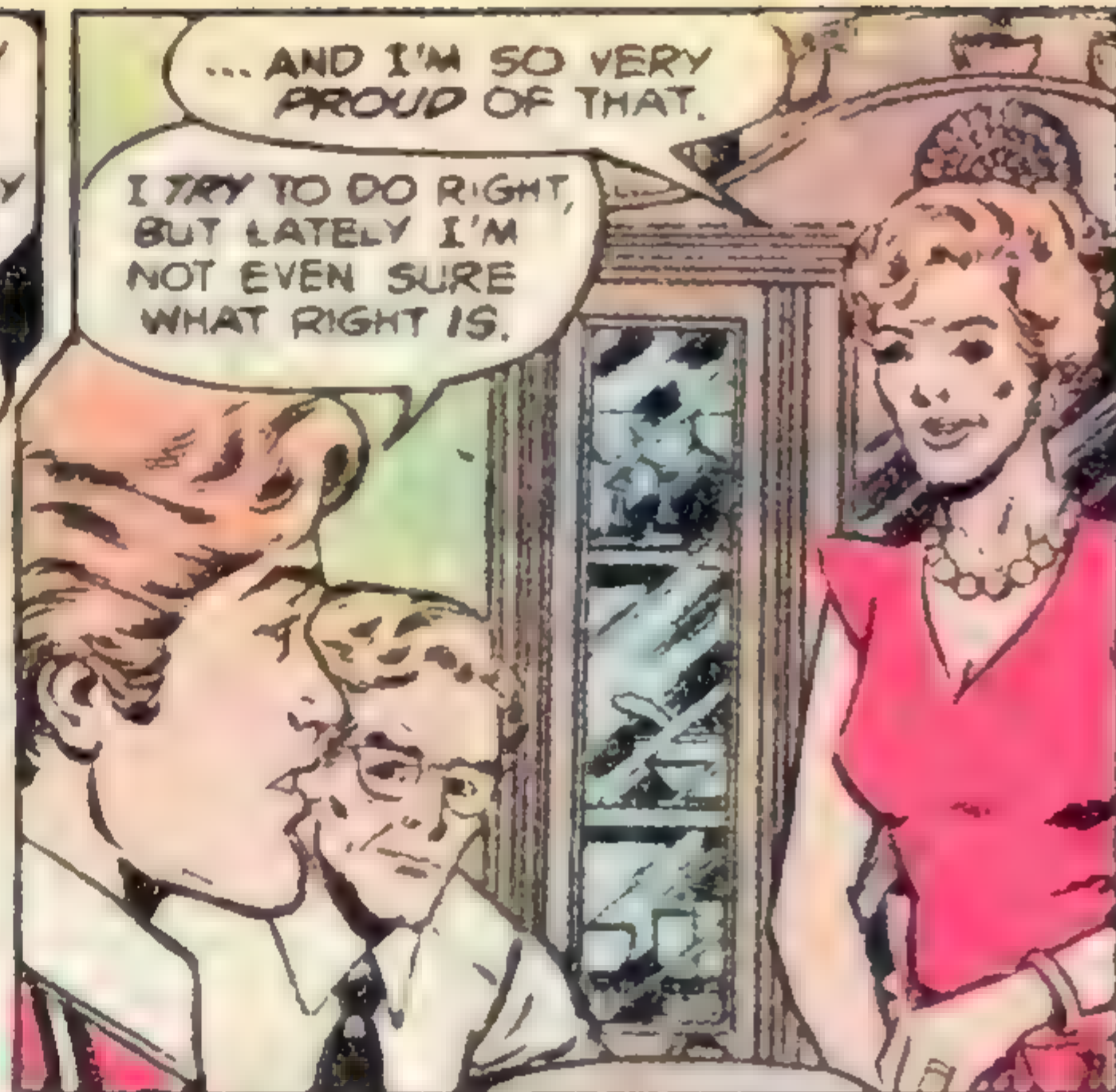
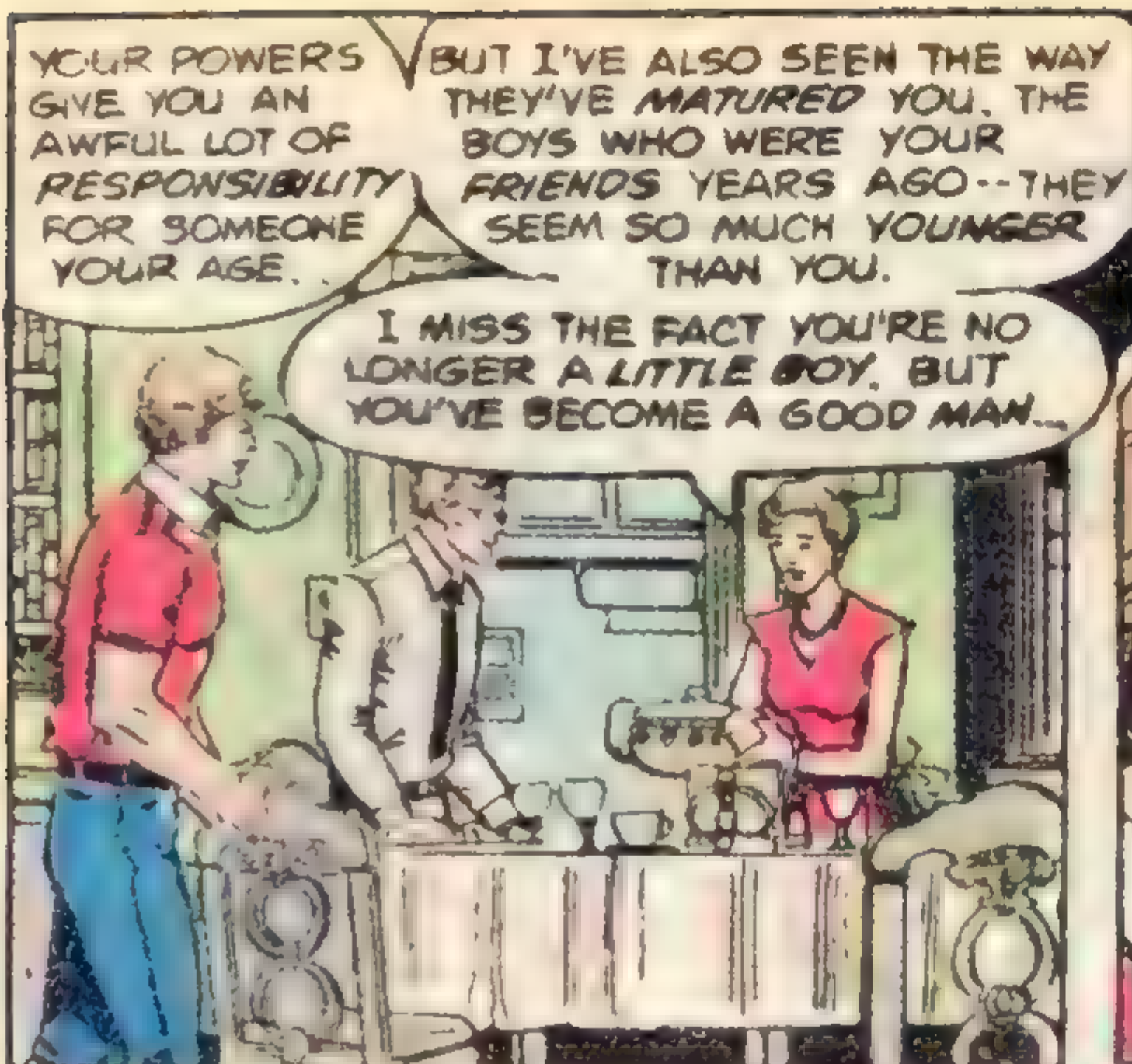
I'LL TAKE IT, MOM. AND, MOM-- WHAT DO YOU THINK?



I MEAN, ABOUT ME... AND KID FLASH?

WHAT DO I THINK, HONEY? YOU DON'T TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT YOU DO, AND MAYBE THAT'S FOR THE BEST.

BUT, I DO WORRY ABOUT YOU. ABOUT WHAT YOU DO.



AND THE SUN CONTINUES TO SHINE OVER BLUE VALLEY...

THE UNDULATING LIGHT BATHES RAVEN'S GLOWING BODY WITH AN AURA OF BURNING FISSION AS SHE REACHES DEEP INTO HER SELF TOWARD THE CENTER OF HER BEING.



SHE HAS LEARNED TO CONTROL HER EVERY THOUGHT, TO USE HER MIND TO DRAW FORTH FROM ITS DARKEST RECESSES WHATEVER IS NOW NEEDED.

THE PAST MINUTES HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH FEAR, BUT SHE FORCES HERSELF CALM, FORCES THE INTRUDING TERRORS TO BE BANISHED FROM HER THOUGHTS.

BUT...

IMAGES, DARK AND TERRIBLE-- THEY SEEK TO SHATTER MY FORCED TRANQUILITY.



I UNDERSTAND IT NOW-- I UNDERSTAND IT ALL!



MY SOUL AND BODY ARE APART... AND THESE DEMONS, THE DEMONS THAT LIVE IN US ALL-- THEY SEEK TO FURTHER SEPARATE MY SELVES!

TO PLUNGE ME EVER DEEPER INTO MY OWN DESPAIR!



BUT I WILL NOT LET THEM SUCCEED!

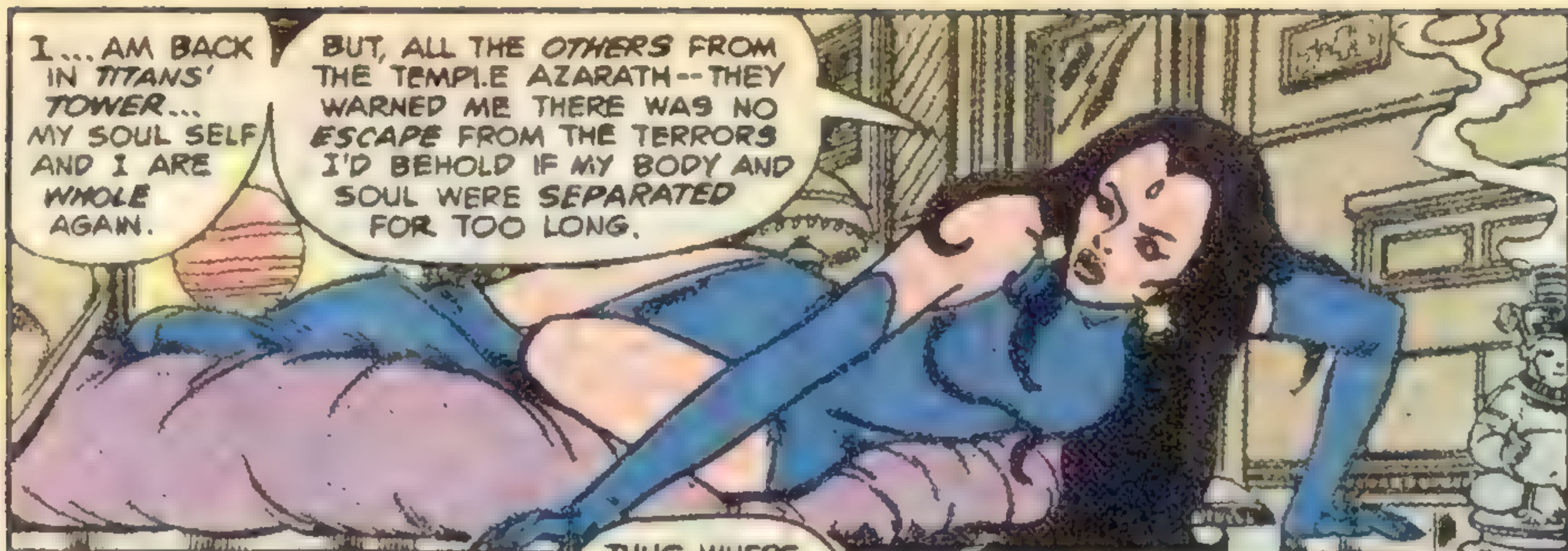
I CAN CONQUER WHAT I AM... CONQUER MY OWN FEARS... CONQUER THE VERY FORCES WITHIN ME THAT SEEK TO TEAR ME ASUNDER!



I CAN CONQUER THEM ALL-- AND I WILL EMERGE TRIUMPHANT!

AND, IN AN INSTANT, ALL IS GONE.





I... AM BACK
IN TITANS'
TOWER...
MY SOUL SELF
AND I ARE
WHOLE
AGAIN.

BUT, ALL THE OTHERS FROM
THE TEMPLE AZARATH--THEY
WARNED ME THERE WAS NO
ESCAPE FROM THE TERRORS
I'D BEHOLD IF MY BODY AND
SOUL WERE SEPARATED
FOR TOO LONG.

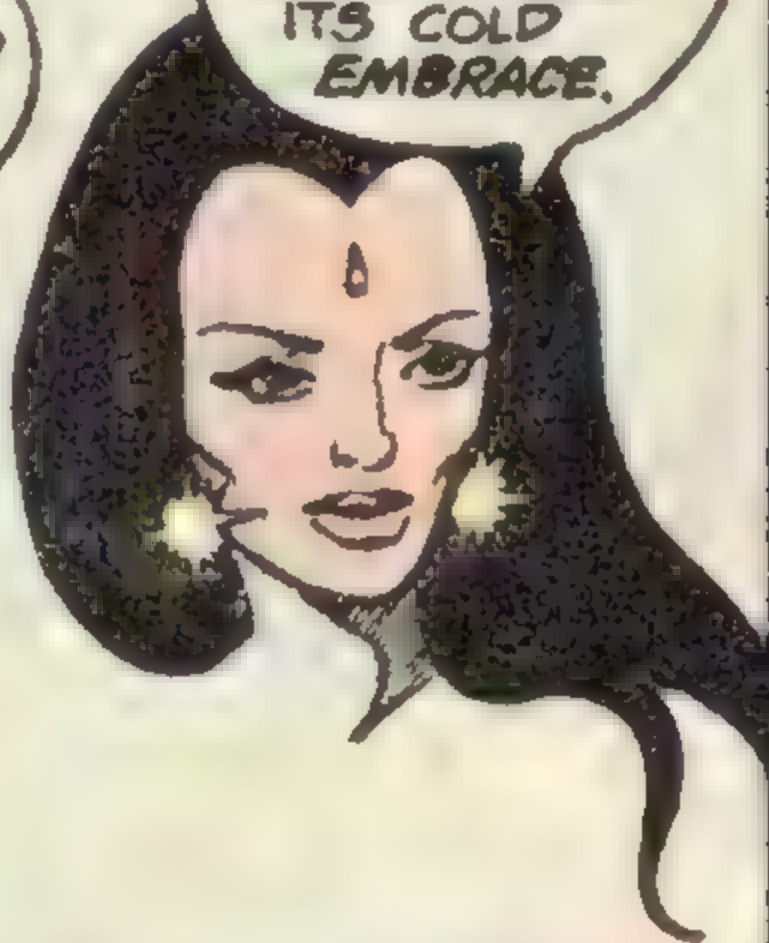
THUS WHERE
THEY FAILED,
I SUCCEEDED!

I'VE
CONQUERED
THAT FINAL
BOUNDARY.
NEVER AGAIN
SHALL I FEAR
ITS COLD
EMBRACE.

THE OTHERS--? OF COURSE!
THEIR VERY PHILOSOPHY
PREVENTS THEM FROM RESISTING.
THEY WERE INCAPABLE OF
FIGHTING FOR THEIR OWN
LIVES. BUT I--

I FOUGHT! I
RESISTED! I CARED
TOO MUCH FOR
LIFE TO THROW
IT AWAY.

SHE STANDS TALL AND PROUD,
FOR SHE HAS FACED THE
METTLE OF HER COURAGE AND
SHE IS PLEASED WITH WHAT
SHE HAS SEEN



"PERFECT! GREAT! JUST GREAT!
ANOTHER ONE NOW! YEAH...
JUST RIGHT! PERFECT! NOW,
TURN... HEAD BACK!



"PERFECT, JUST PERFECT!
GREAT! TURN AGAIN! HEAD
BACK NOW. RIGHT! PERFECT!
ABSOLUTELY GREAT!"



I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, DONNA, BUT I'M ENJOYING THIS.

I'LL REMEMBER THAT, TERRY. NEXT TIME I BRING ALONG A BLINDFOLD!

OKAY, KORY, THAT'S A WRAP!

I'LL SHOW THESE TO CARL WHEN THEY'RE DEVELOPED!

SHE'D MAKE A GREAT MODEL, DONNA.

OKAY, OKAY, JUST PULL THOSE EYES BACK IN, WILLYA?

YOU'RE MY GUY, AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT.

WELL, EXCUUUUSE ME!

THAT'S BETTER!

YOU NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT TERRY BEFORE, DONNA. WHEN DID YOU TWO MEET?

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, RIGHT AFTER MY DIVORCE!

AND MEETING DONNA WAS THE GREATEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME.

I BET YOU SAY THAT TO ALL THE GIRLS WHO MADLY LOVE YOU.

I MUST SAY THIS HAS BEEN AN ENJOYABLE DAY... THE FIRST REALLY GOOD DAY I'VE HAD HERE ON EARTH SINCE... OOOPS! WAS I SUPPOSED TO SAY THAT, DONNA?

IT'S OKAY, KORIAND'R... TERRY KNOWS.

IT CERTAINLY SET ME BACK A LITTLE WHEN DONNA TOLD ME WHO SHE WAS.

BUT THEN I FIGURED IF SHE'S A WONDER GIRL, I MUST BE SOME KIND OF WONDER GUY.

AND NOW, KORY, SINCE DONNA AND I HAVE A DINNER AND LATE NIGHT DATE...

IT'S BEEN A REAL PLEASURE.

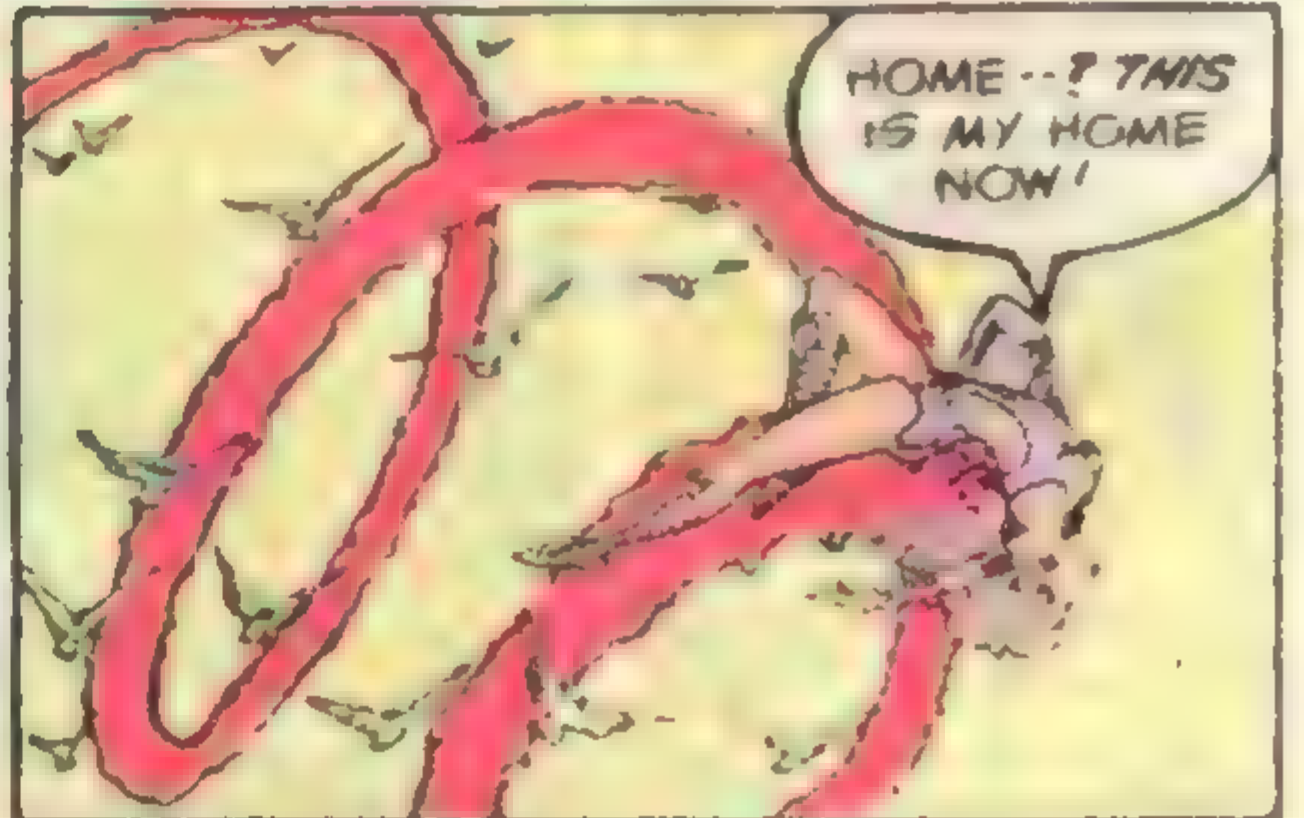
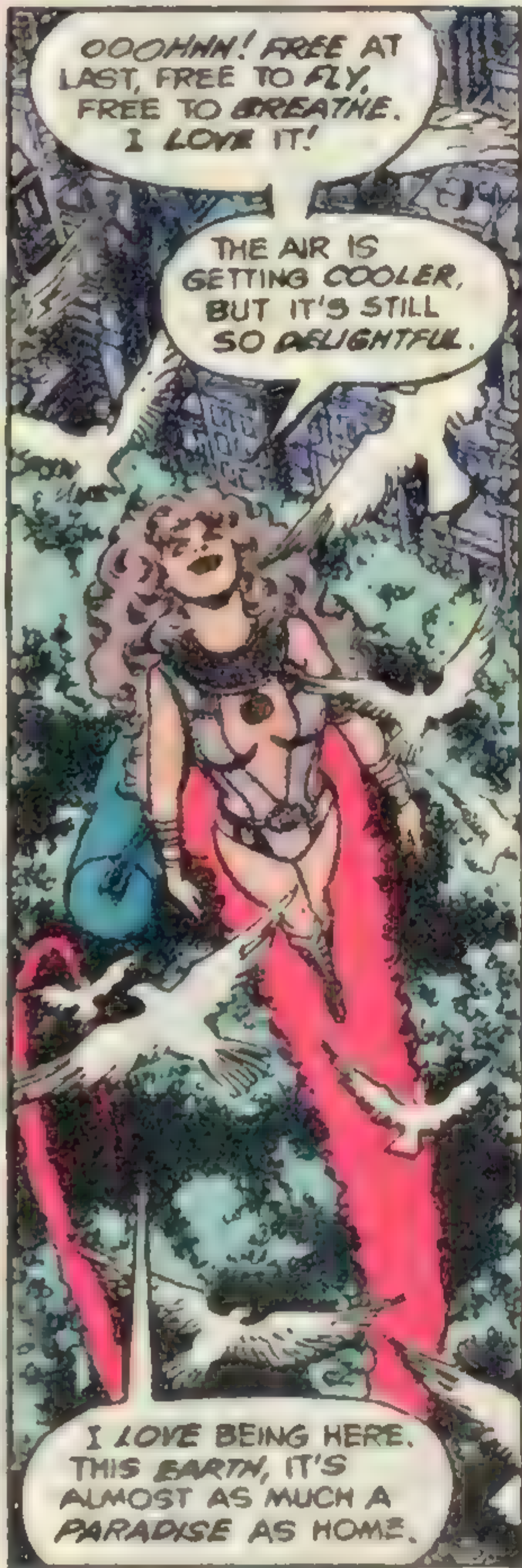
YOU TOO, KORY. LISTEN, DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME, OKAY?

'BYE, HAVE A GOOD TIME.

H... HE KISSED MY HAND?

I DON'T KNOW WHY...

...BUT I CERTAINLY ENJOYED IT.



BUT THE UNBRIDLED JOY OF TOTAL FREEDOM DOES NOT LAST LONG, FOR...

THAT HORSE AND CARRIAGE SEEM TO HAVE **BROKEN FREE**, AND--

THAT CHILD... JUST LYING THERE. THERE'S NO WAY TO GET HIM OUT OF THE WAY IN TIME.

OH, NO--
TROUBLE ON THE GROUND!

XHAL! HE'LL BE CRUSHED!

CAN'T REACH THE CHILD, BUT MY **STARBOLTS** CAN STILL STOP THE HORSE.

HAVE TO **TEMPER** MY BLAST... ENOUGH TO ONLY **STUN** THE HORSE, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO **HARM** HIM.

AHHH... THERE... THE BOY IS **SAFE**, AND ONCE MORE ALL IS **WELL**.

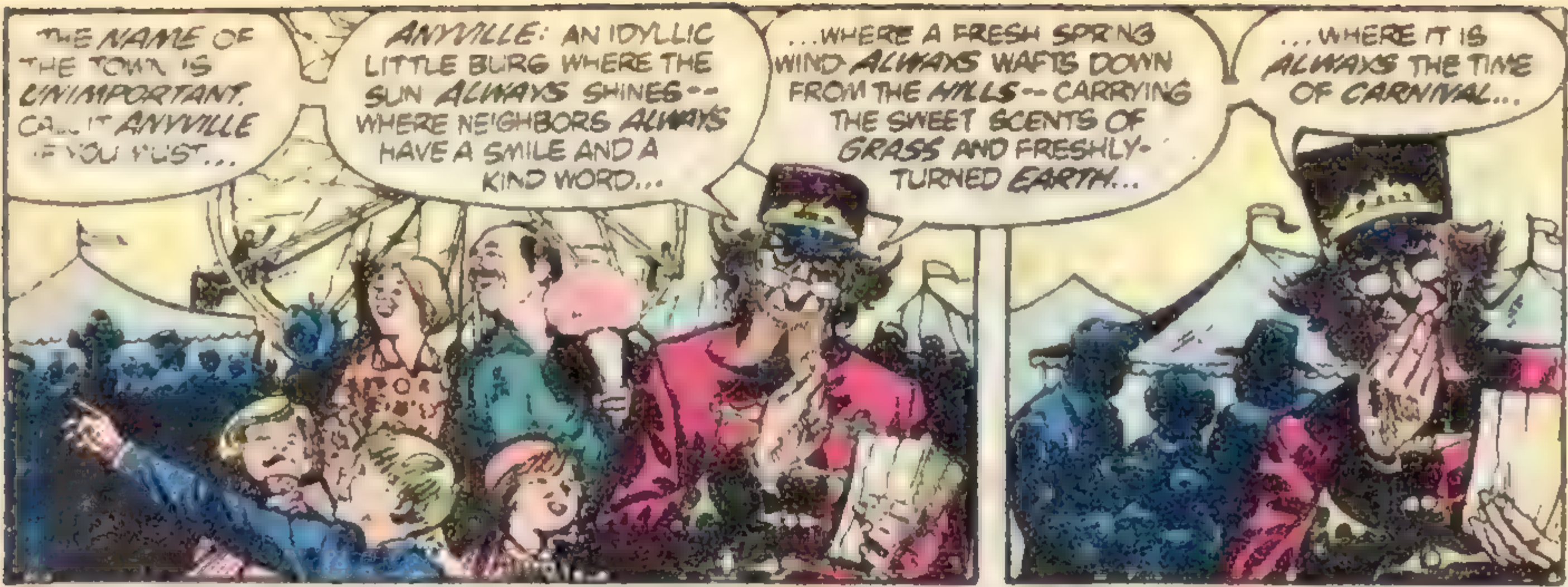
OR, MAYBE I DO HAVE SOMETHING TO DO.

IT IS GROWING DARK. ANOTHER DAY IS OVER, AND I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO THAN--

I WONDER WHAT **DICK** IS UP TO TONIGHT?

MMMMMM!

THE DAY ENDS AS IT BEGAN, FILLED WITH WARMTH, AND BRIMMING WITH HOPE.



The Piper at the Gates of Hell

J. M. DeMATEIS, DAN SPIEGLE, JOHN COSTANZA, JERRY SERPE, MICHAEL KALUTA, LEN WEIN
Writer Artist Letterer Colorist Inspiration Editor

THE PIPER AMBLES DOWN THE HILL AT A SHUFFLING GAIT, ALL THE WHILE PLUTING A SPRIGHTLY TUNE THAT IS ODDLY DISQUIETINGING DESPITE ITS GAY MELODY...

HE SOON REACHES THE TOWN, FRESH DUST SETTLING IN THE ALREADY-FILTY GARMENTS THAT HANG FROM HIS SPINDLY FRAME...

...FRESH FEAR SUFFUSING THOSE WHO FIRST GLIMPSE THE GAUNT YELLOWED FACE...



IT IS NOT THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN THAT SPREADS WITH EACH DEFTLY-PLAYED NOTE TO STILL THE ORCHESTRA AND THE LAUGHTER AND THE BOYISH SHOUTS OF BRAVADO...

... BUT THE FEAR OF AN EVIL AS FAMILIAR AS THE FEATURES THAT GREET EACH OF THESE PEOPLE IN THE BATHROOM MIRROR EVERY MORNING...

THE TOWN'S PEOPLE KNOW THIS PIPER.



THEY KNOW, TOO, WHAT IT IS HE'S COME FOR

WITH NOT A SINGLE MUTTER OF PROTEST OR RESRET RISING FROM THE ASSEMBLED THROG...

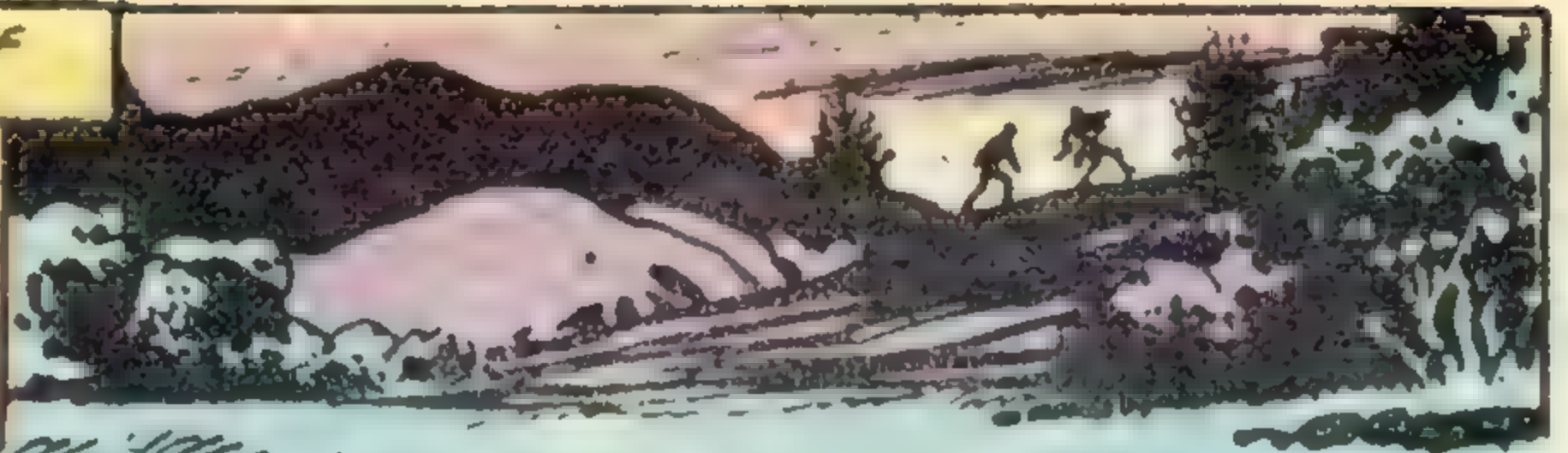
THEY GIVE...

...AND THE PIPER TAKES.



WHEN, AT LAST, THE FINAL ECHO OF HIS SONG HAS FADED...

WHEN THE MADDENING CLANKING OF HIS HALF-ROTTED BONES NO LONGER CAUSES INFANTS TO SHRIEK AND FRANTICALLY CLAW THEIR MOTHERS' BREASTS...



... THE CARNIVAL RESUMES...

AND, EVERYONE LATER AGREES, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER ONE.



NIGHT FALLS AND WITH IT COMES THE SILVER LIGHT OF A MOON NEVER LESS THAN FULL. DINNER DISHES ARE WASHED, DRIED, AND CAREFULLY STACKED...

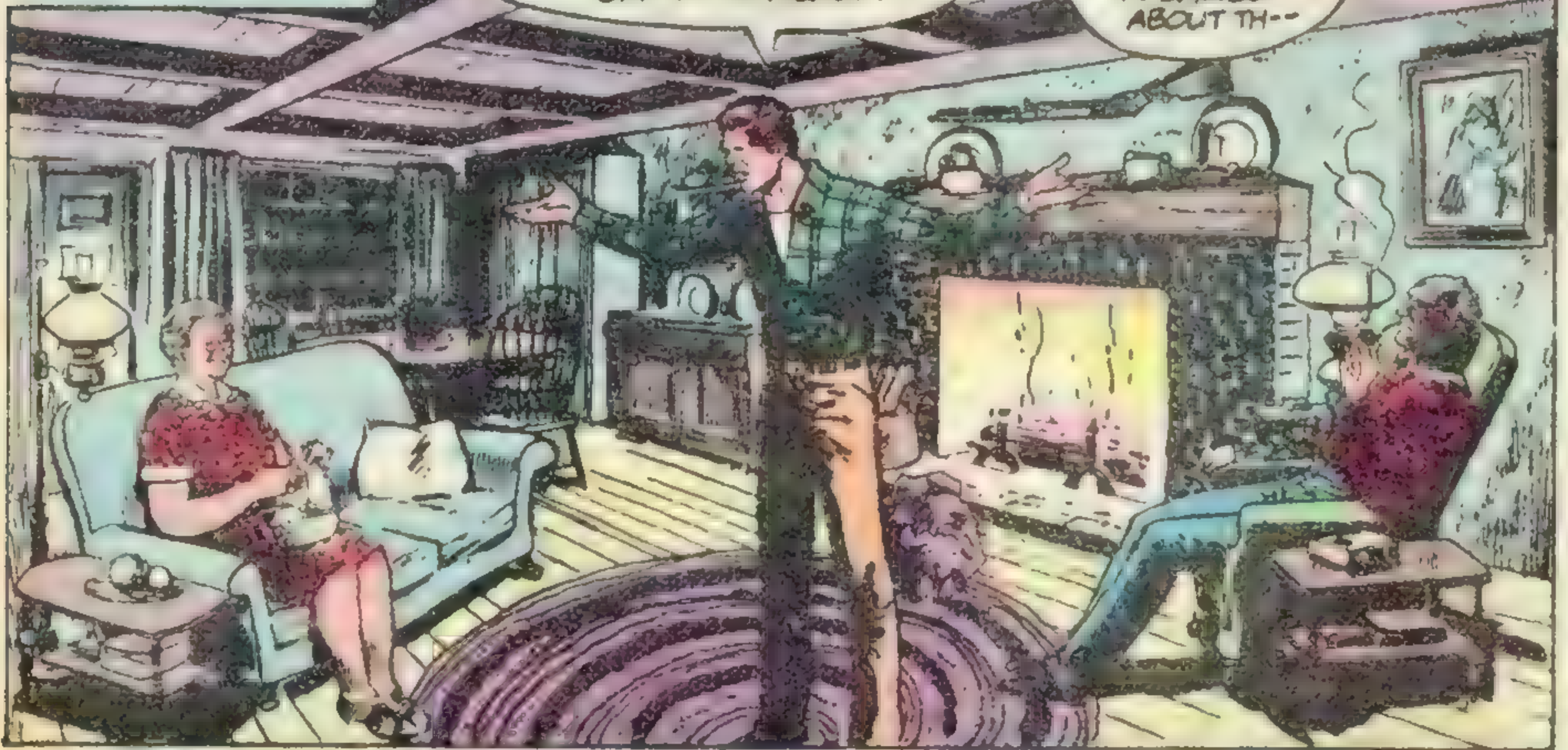


... AS FAMILIES RETIRE TO LIVING ROOMS SMELLING OF CEDAR AND PINE TO EXCHANGE INNOCUOUS PLEASANTRIES ABOUT THE DAY'S EVENTS...

BUT, IN ONE HOUSE, THE CONVERSATION HAS A BITTER, CAUSTIC EDGE...

IT ISN'T RIGHT WHAT THEY DID TO SIMPLE JOE, MOTHER! SO WHAT IF HE WAS A LITTLE OFF IN THE HEAD...

HE WAS A HUMAN BEING. HE SMILED. HE CARED ABOUT TH--



ADAM CAWFIELD... WE'VE HAD NOTHING BUT PEACE, PLENTY, AND HAPPINESS IN THIS TOWN FOR NIGH ON FIVE GENERATIONS.

ALL WE'VE HAD TO DO IN RETURN IS GIVE... HIM... ONE... UH... COMPANION EVERY TWENTY YEARS. ONE USELESS SOUL WHO'LL NEVER BE MISSED.

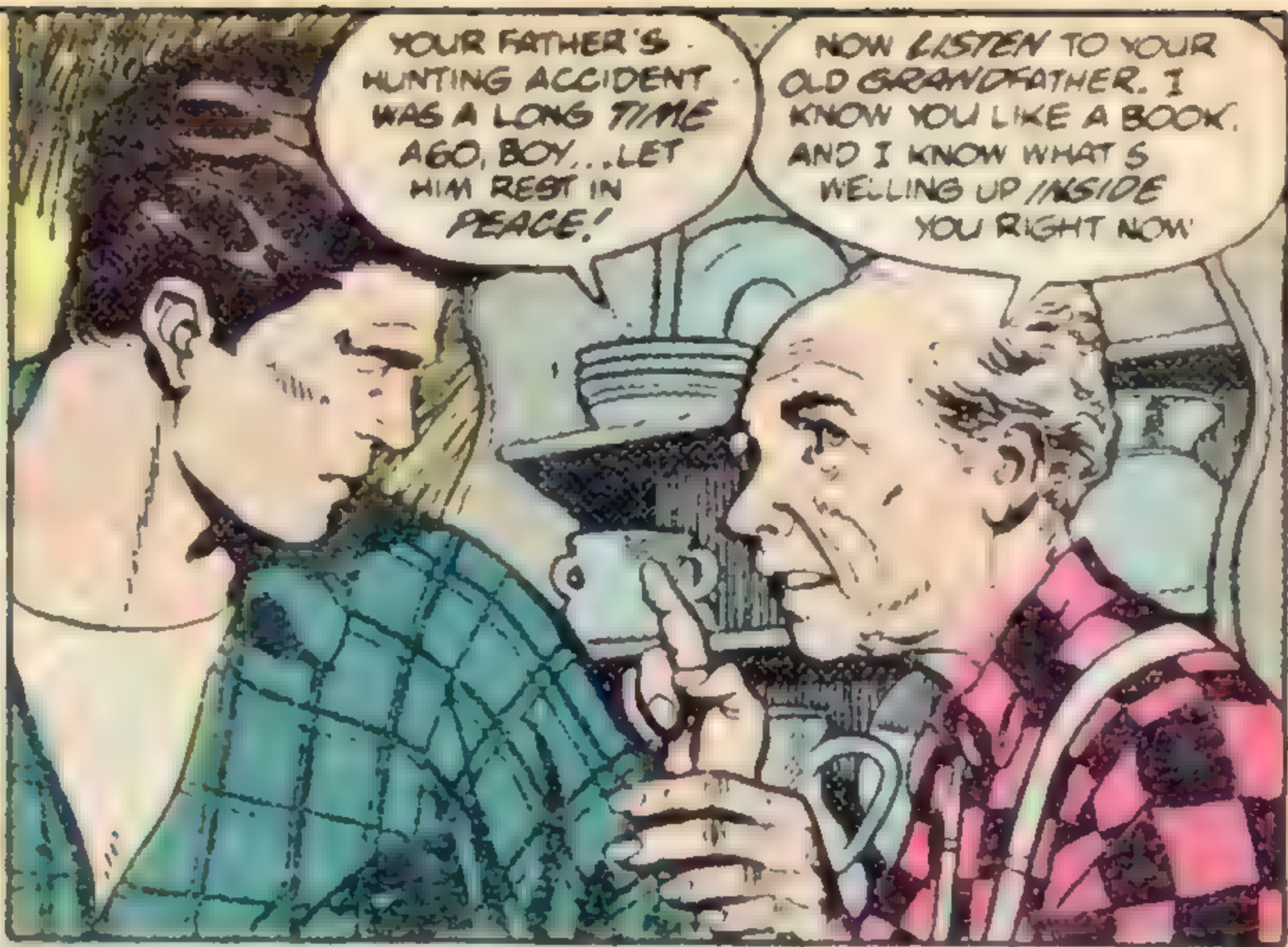




CONSIDERING WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE OUTSIDE--IT'S A SMALL PRICE TO PAY INDEED!

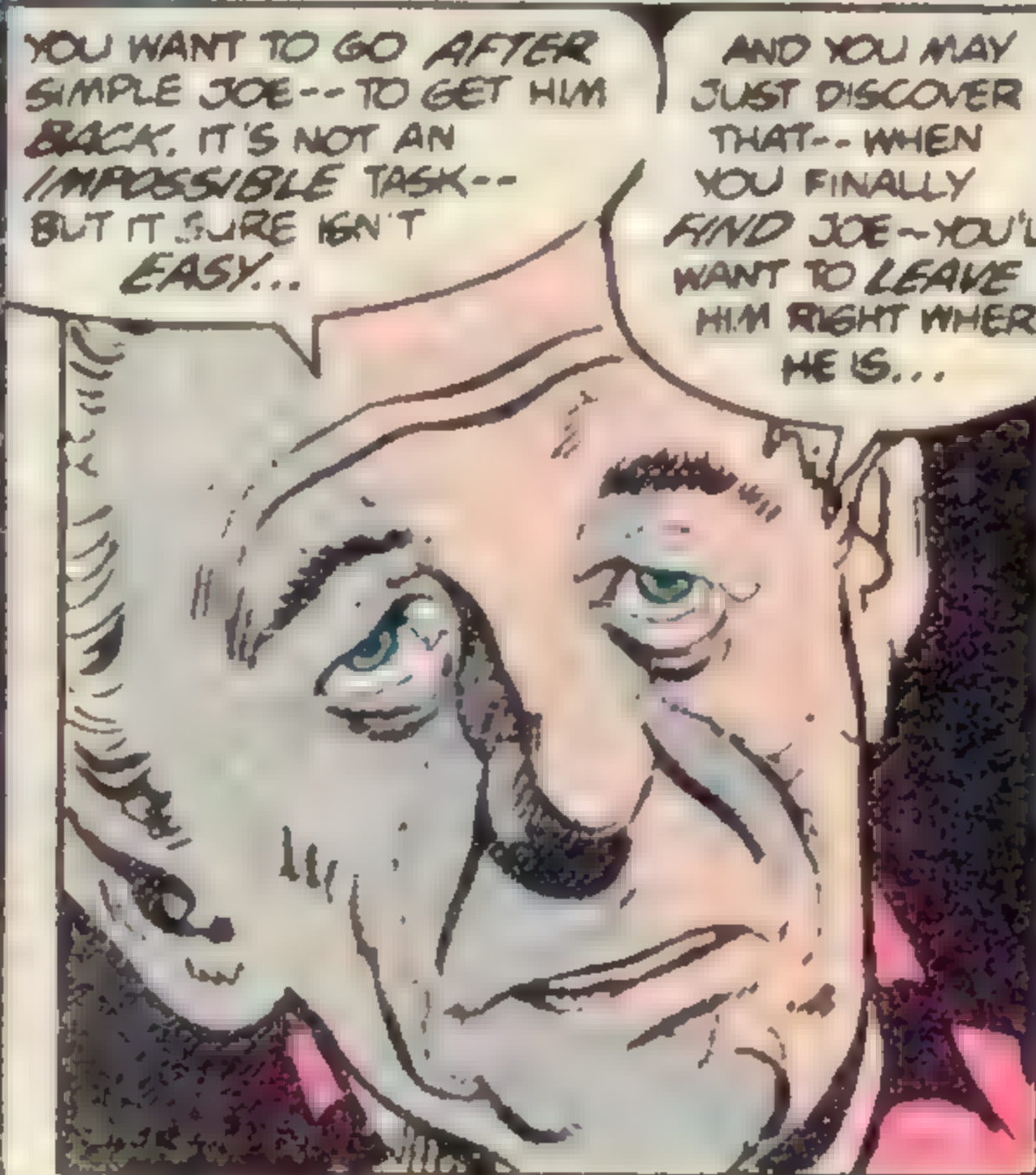
A SMALL PRICE...? WOULD YOU SAY THAT SO CASUALLY IF IT HAD BEEN ME THAT HE'D TAKEN?!

WHAT WOULD FATHER THINK IF HE HEARD YOU?



YOUR FATHER'S HUNTING ACCIDENT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, BOY...LET HIM REST IN PEACE!

NOW LISTEN TO YOUR OLD GRANDFATHER. I KNOW YOU LIKE A BOOK, AND I KNOW WHAT'S WELLING UP INSIDE YOU RIGHT NOW



YOU WANT TO GO AFTER SIMPLE JOE-- TO GET HIM BACK. IT'S NOT AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK-- BUT IT SURE ISN'T EASY...

AND YOU MAY JUST DISCOVER THAT-- WHEN YOU FINALLY FIND JOE--YOU'LL WANT TO LEAVE HIM RIGHT WHERE HE IS...



I DON'T THINK SO.

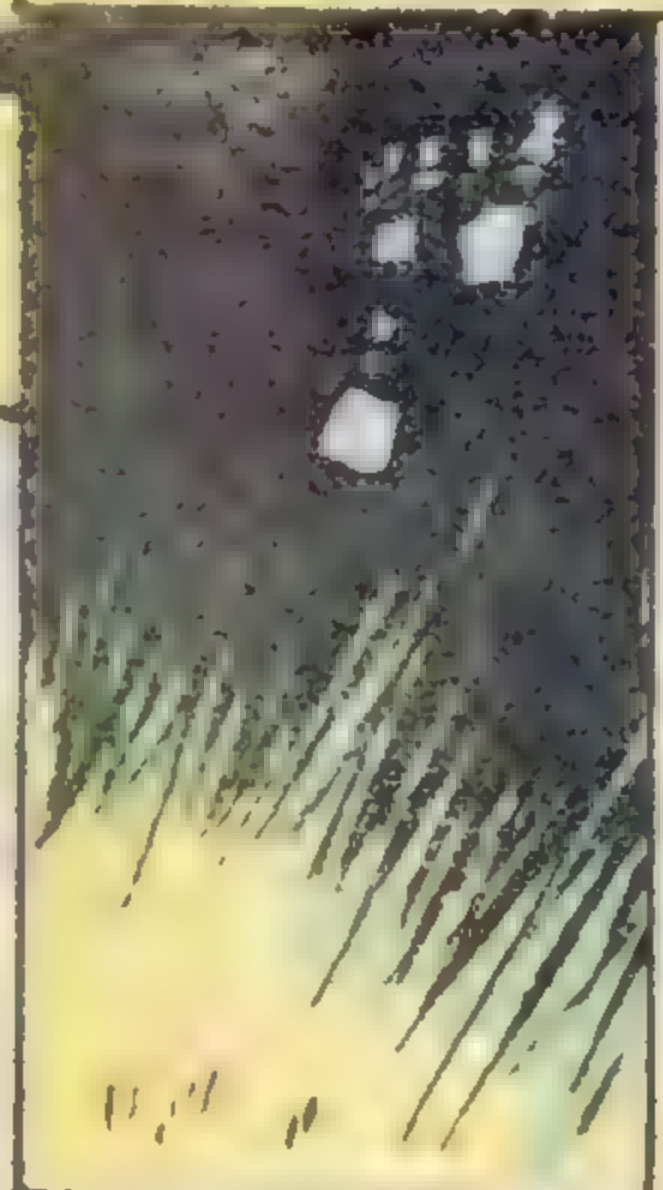
"THEN GRAB YOURSELF A LANTERN, BOY-- AND HEAD OUT INTO THE NIGHT.

"...WILL FIND A TRAIL AS UNMISTAKABLE AS THE BAYING OF A WOLF..

"...A TRAIL...

"...THAT WILL DRAW YOU...

"KEEP YOUR HEART STILL AND YOUR EYES WIDE. IT'S BEEN SAID THAT ANYONE WHO REALLY WANTS TO FOLLOW... HIM...





...STRAIGHT TO HIM...

WELCOME, ADAM.
I HAVE BEEN WAITING.
THERE IS ALWAYS
ONE WHO
COMES.

...I AM
PLEASED
THAT IT IS
YOU.

WITH NOT EVEN
THE SLIGHTEST
CLATTER OF
BONES, THE
PIPER RISES,
THE ANCIENT
GATE RISING
WITH HIM,
SHRILLY
SQUEALING
ON LONG-
RUSTED
HINGES...



IS THIS...
HELL?

IT IS A HELL.
THERE ARE TEN
MILLION OF
THEM ON THIS
WORLD ALONE--
IN TEN MILLION
FORMS...

BUT YOU DID NOT COME HERE
TO LEARN THAT YOU
CAME HERE TO VISIT A
FRIEND...

OH MY
GOD.

THE WORDS SEEM WOEFULLY
INEFFECTUAL IN THIS DAMP
CAVERN WHERE EVIL HANGS
SO COMFORTABLY IN THE
FECAL AIR...



...ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE
AWFUL SIGHT THAT SENDS ADAM
CAUFIELD'S HEAD SPINNING AND
HIS STOMACH CHURNING UP INTO
HIS THROAT...

JOE!!

THE VOICE IS HIGH-PITCHED,
ALMOST GIRLISH, BUT IT IS
STRIPPED BARE OF ALL
FEELING; SKELETAL TONES
DEVOID OF EMOTION...



I'LL
HELP YOU,
JOE!

PERHAPS YOU WILL. BUT
FIRST THERE IS SOMETHING
IMPORTANT I MUST
SHOW YOU. COME.

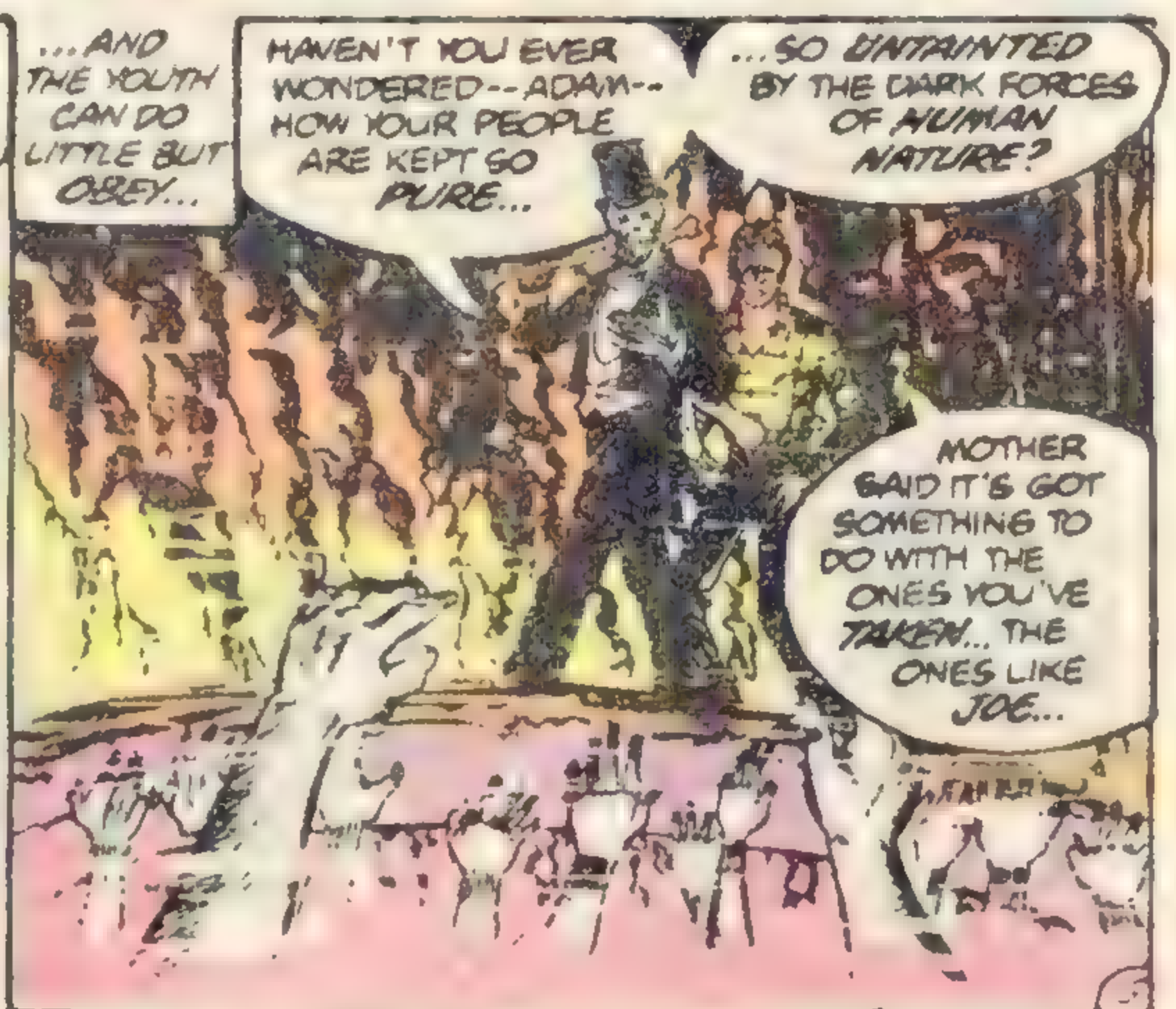
...AND
THE YOUTH
CAN DO
LITTLE BUT
OBEY...

HAVEN'T YOU EVER
WONDERED--ADAM--
HOW YOUR PEOPLE
ARE KEPT SO
PURE...

...SO UNTAINTED
BY THE DARK FORCES
OF HUMAN
NATURE?

MOTHER
SAID IT'S GOT
SOMETHING TO
DO WITH THE
ONES YOU'VE
TAKEN... THE
ONES LIKE
JOE...

THE PIPER'S VOICE IS SUDDENLY
INFUSED WITH INTRANSIGENT
COMMAND...



GAZE INTO THE RIVER OF SOULS,
ADAM-- AND UNDERSTAND. IT'S
ALL HERE...

... ALL THE UGLINESS AND BRUT-
ALITY-- ALL THE DECEPTION AND
BASE DESIRE-- ALL THE
JEALOUSY-- ALL THE
INSANITIES...

... ALL HERE

AND IT STAYS HERE AS LONG
AS I HAVE ONE INNOCENT
SOUL TO TORTURE AND
CORRUPT-- ONE ENFEEBLED
CREATURE TOO STUPID TO
KNOW SIN...

NOW DO YOU SEE
WHY JOE *MUST*
REMAIN HERE? WHY
THE OTHERS WHO
CAME LEFT IN UTTER
DEFEAT?

NO!

ARE YOU SO RIGHTEOUS,
ADAM-- THAT YOU THINK
THERE IS NOT A WRAITH IN
THAT RIVER WITH *YOUR*
FACE?

DO YOU THINK
THAT AFTER THOSE
WRETCHED SPIRITS
HAVE BEEN *RELEASED*
ONE WILL NOT COME
SEEKING YOU OUT?

SHUT
UP!

NO MATTER
WHAT THE
CONSEQUENCES...

.. I CANNOT--
I *WILL* NOT--
STAND BY...

...AND LET YOU
DO THIS TO
JOE!

HAHAHA! RUN, ADAM--
RUN SWIFTLY! BUT DON'T
TIRE YOURSELF OUT...

... BECAUSE YOU'LL
SOON BE RETURNING
HERE-- DRAGGING YOUR
FRIEND BEHIND-- BEGGING
ME TO TAKE HIM BACK!
HAHAHA!!

THE ICY LAUGHTER IS LOST IN A
FLAUNT CRASH AS THE GATE
CLAMPS DOWN ACROSS THE
MOUTH OF THE CAVE...

TH-THANK YOU,
ADAM-- THE B-BAD
MAN WAS REALLY
HURTIN' M-M-ME...

FOR A MOMENT THERE
IS NOTHING BUT THE
SOUND OF LABORED
BREATHING AND THE
STEADY RHYTHM OF
FEET FRANTICALLY
TRAMPLING EARTH...

TH-THEY WAS DOIN'
ALL KINDS OF CRAZY
THINGS TO M-ME,
ADAM. AND THEY WAS
L-L-LAUSHIN' AT
ME, TOO!

THEN, A LOUD AND CACOPHONOUS PIPING
ARISES, DEFILING THE NIGHT AIR WITH ITS
JARRING, JANGLING TUNE... AND, AS IF IN RE-
SPONSE, THE SKY IS SOON THICK WITH A HUN-
DRED BLACK-EYED SHADES WHOSE VOICES WAIL
IN OBSCENE HARMONY...

WH-WHAT'S
ALL TH-THAT
NOISE,
A-A-A?

BUT STILL ADAM AND JOE RUN,
KNOWING FULL WELL THAT, IN A
MATTER OF MINUTES, THEY WILL
REACH SECURITY, WARMTH, RE-
ASSURANCE...

...HOME...

I D-DON'T
UNDERSTAND,
ADAM...

...WH-WH-WHAT
DID THEY
P-D-DO?

IT IS A SIMPLE QUESTION, PROFFERED IN JOE'S USUAL CHILD-LIKE TONES, BUT IT ELICITS A MOST UNUSUAL RESPONSE...

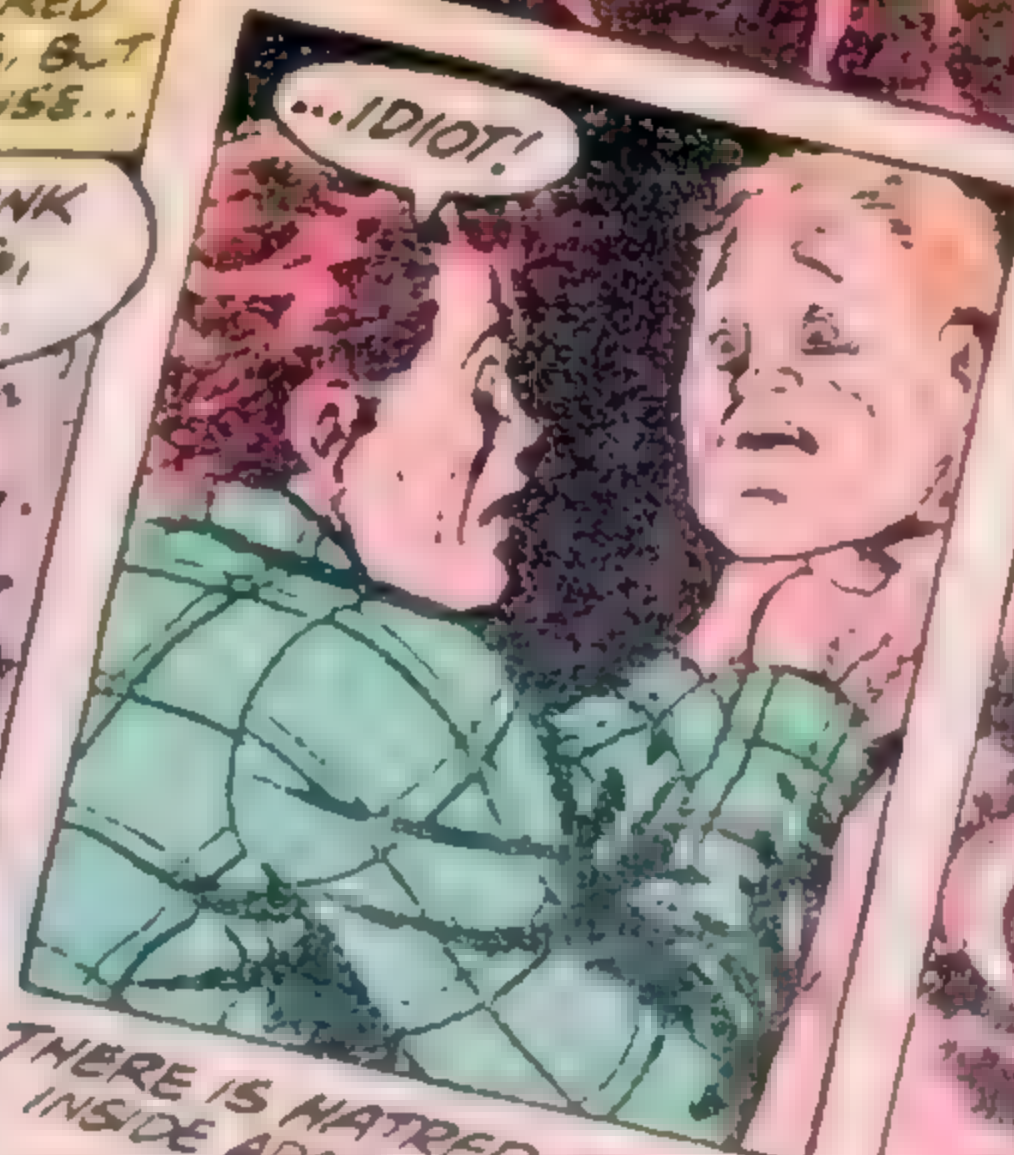
WHAT DID THEY DO, ADAM?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY DID-- YOU BIG, STUTTERING...



THERE IS HATRED AT WORK INSIDE ADAM CAUFIELD...

...IDIOT!



...AN ELEMENTAL HATRED ONCE SUBMERGED IN A MOLTEN RIVER...

YOU IGNORANT-- DROOLING-- MORON! YOU USELESS SH



BUT THERE IS MORE TO A MAN THAN HATE...

OH, JOE... I'M SORRY... IT'S ALIVE IN ME NOW, TOO...

... BUT... WE MANAGED WITHOUT THE PIPER ONCE... MANAGED TO CONTROL THE RIVER-SPIRITS... WE CAN DO IT AGAIN...



YES, WE CAN, ADAM...

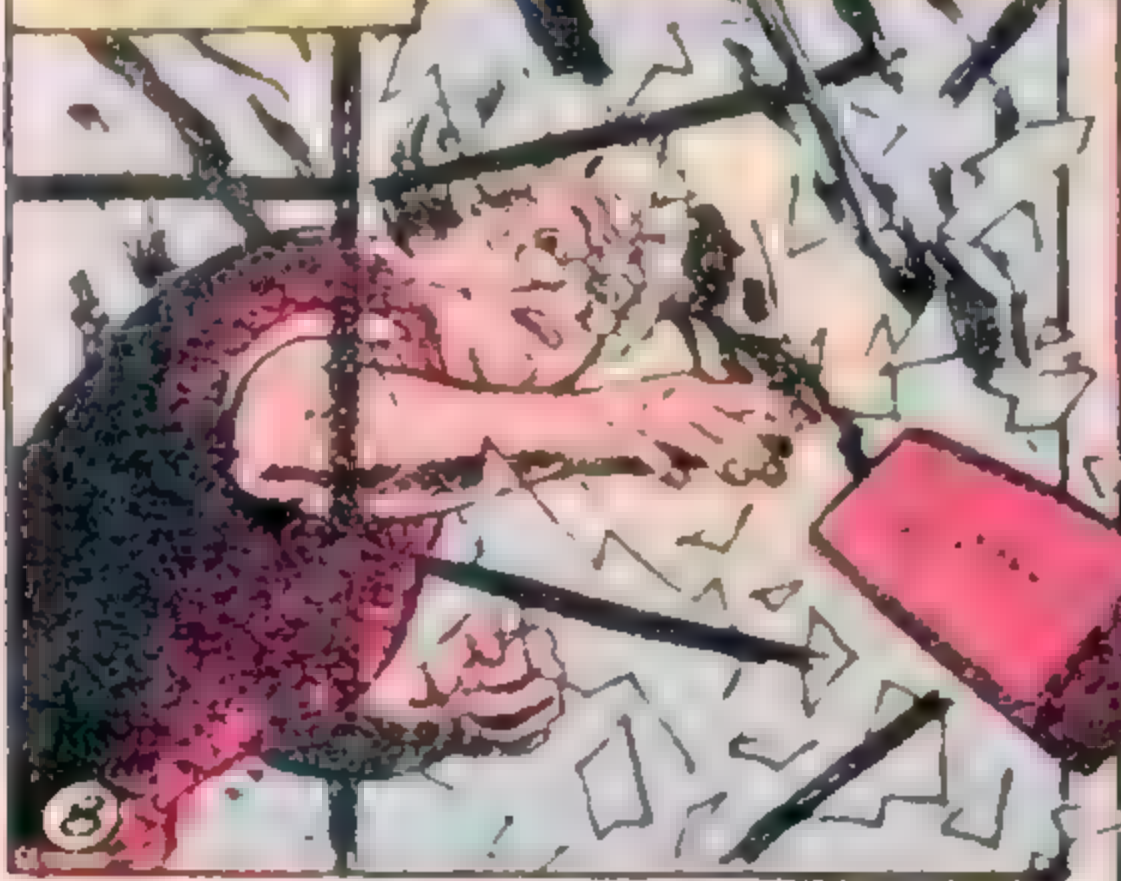
IT'S EASIER FOR THE OLD-- THE PASSIONS ARE WEAKER TWENTY YEARS AND I TRIED TO BEAT SKULL-FACE-- AND I FAILED...

HE SHOWED ME THE RIVER... AND I TURNED TAIL LIKE A SCARED DEER EVEN THOUGH HE HAD MY SON...



FATHER. ?

THE HUNTING ACCIDENT DIDN'T KILL YOUR FATHER-- BUT IT CRIPPLED HIM... AND HIS BRAIN HAS NEVER RIGHT AGAIN. THAT'S WHY YOUR MOTHER GAVE HIM TO THE PIPER.



THEN WE'LL... PRAY FOR STRENGTH, GRANDFATHER...

YES... WE'LL PRAY...

... AND WE WON'T EVER LOOK BACK...

SOMEWHERE -- A PIPER PLAYS A SONG OF FOR-EVER-SPRING. AND-- SOMEWHERE-- THE WEAK ONES LISTEN...



"DON'T HATE HER FOR IT, ADAM. SHE'S NOT A STRONG WOMAN. IT'S SO HARD TO BE STRONG..."

FOR BABA--WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE... J.M.D.

THE HAUNTING

HE WAS A HERO TO SOME, A VILLAIN TO OTHERS... AND WHEREVER HE RODE PEOPLE SPOKE HIS NAME IN WHISPERS. HE HAD NO FRIENDS, THIS JONAH HEX, BUT HE DID HAVE TWO COMPANIONS: ONE WAS DEATH ITSELF... THE OTHER, THE ACRID SMELL OF GUNSMOKE...

**JONAH
HEX**

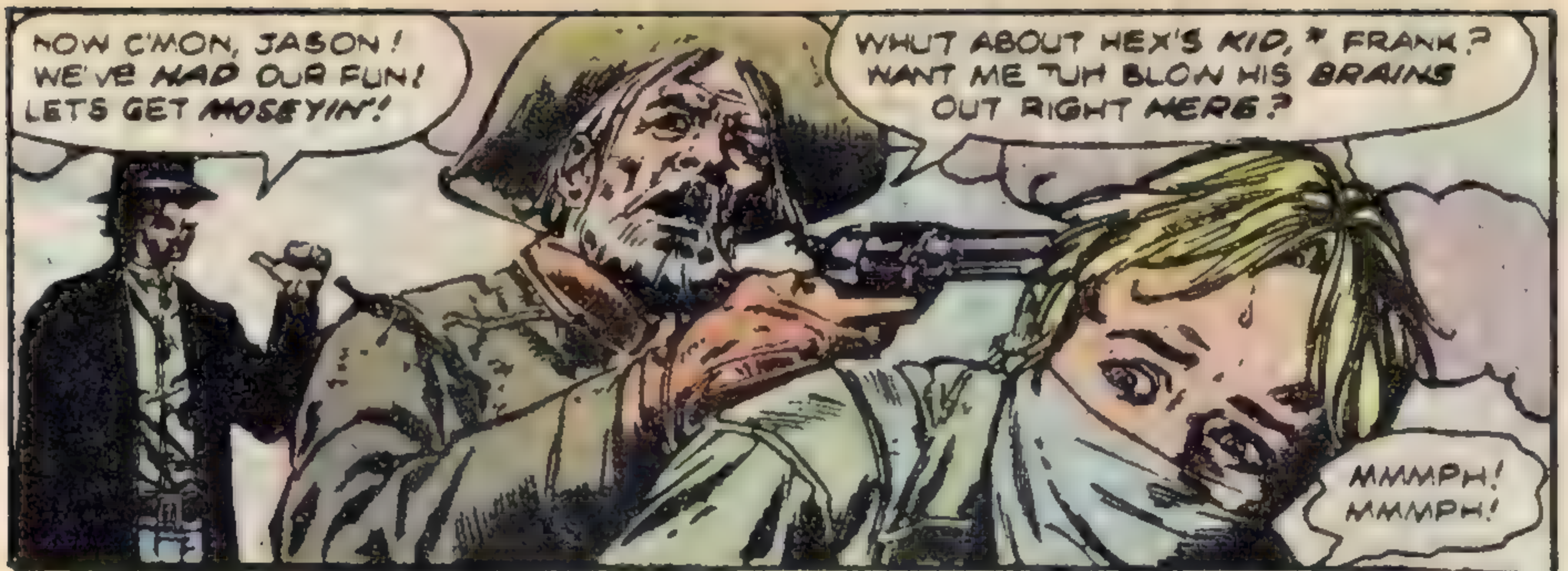
HA HA!
WE DID IT,
FRANK! WE
SHORE 'NUFF
DID IT!

WAY WE JUST SPLATTERED
JONAH HEX ALL OVER THEM
CABIN WALLS, EVEN HIS OWN KIN
AIN'T GONNA BE ABLE TUH
RECO'NIZE THE REMAINS!

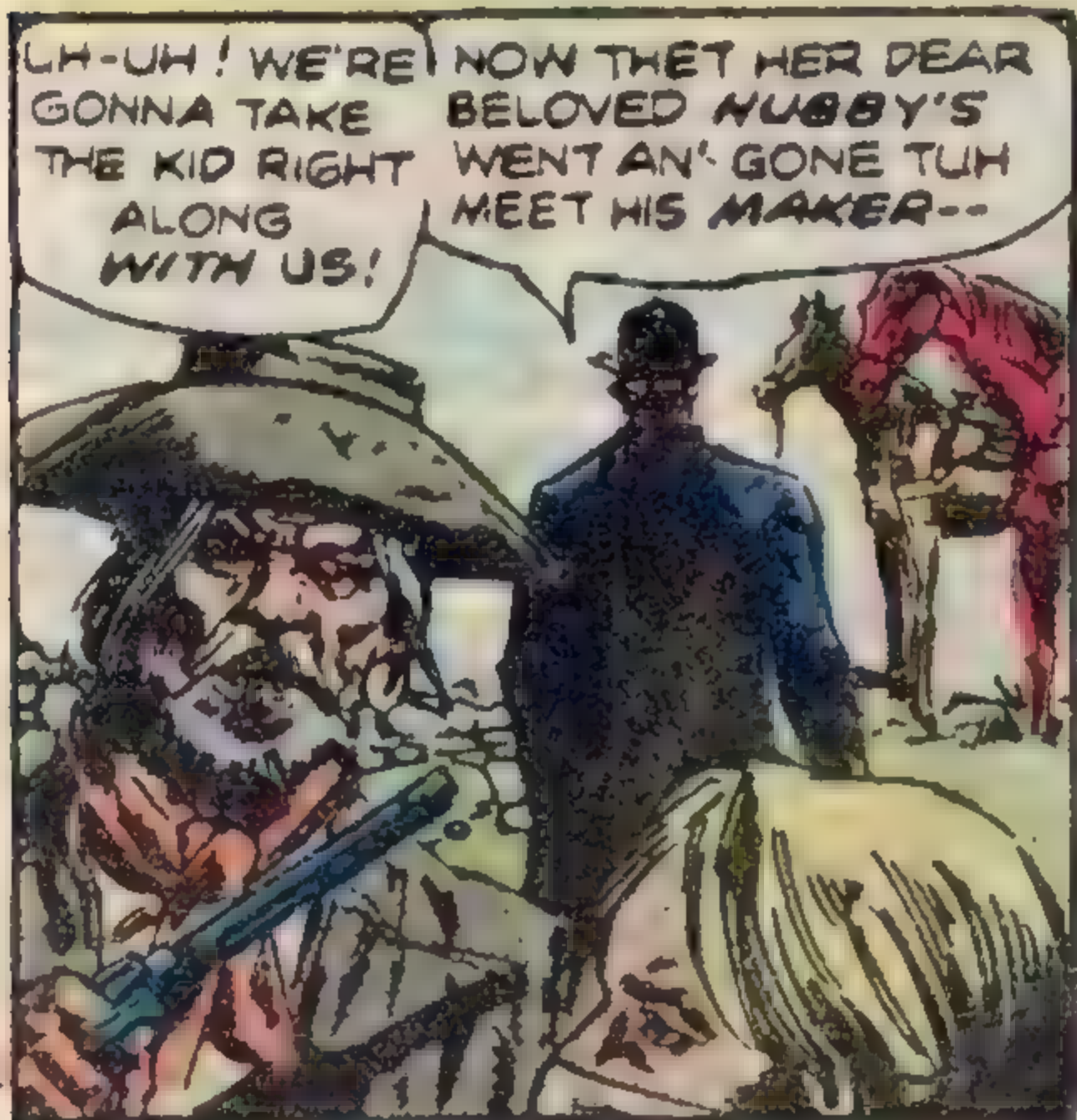
BA-ROOOM!

EVER'BODY DOES SOMETHIN'
STUPID AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR
LIFETIME, JABON! BUT WALKIN'
INTUH THET CABIN WUZ SHORE
THE LAST STUPID THING THET
MULE-EYED BOUNTY HUNTER
EVER DID!

SCRIPT: MICHAEL FLEISHER
ART: AYERS & DEZUNIGA
LETTERING: SHELLY LEFERMAN
COLORING: BOB LE ROSE
EDITOR: ROSS ANDRU



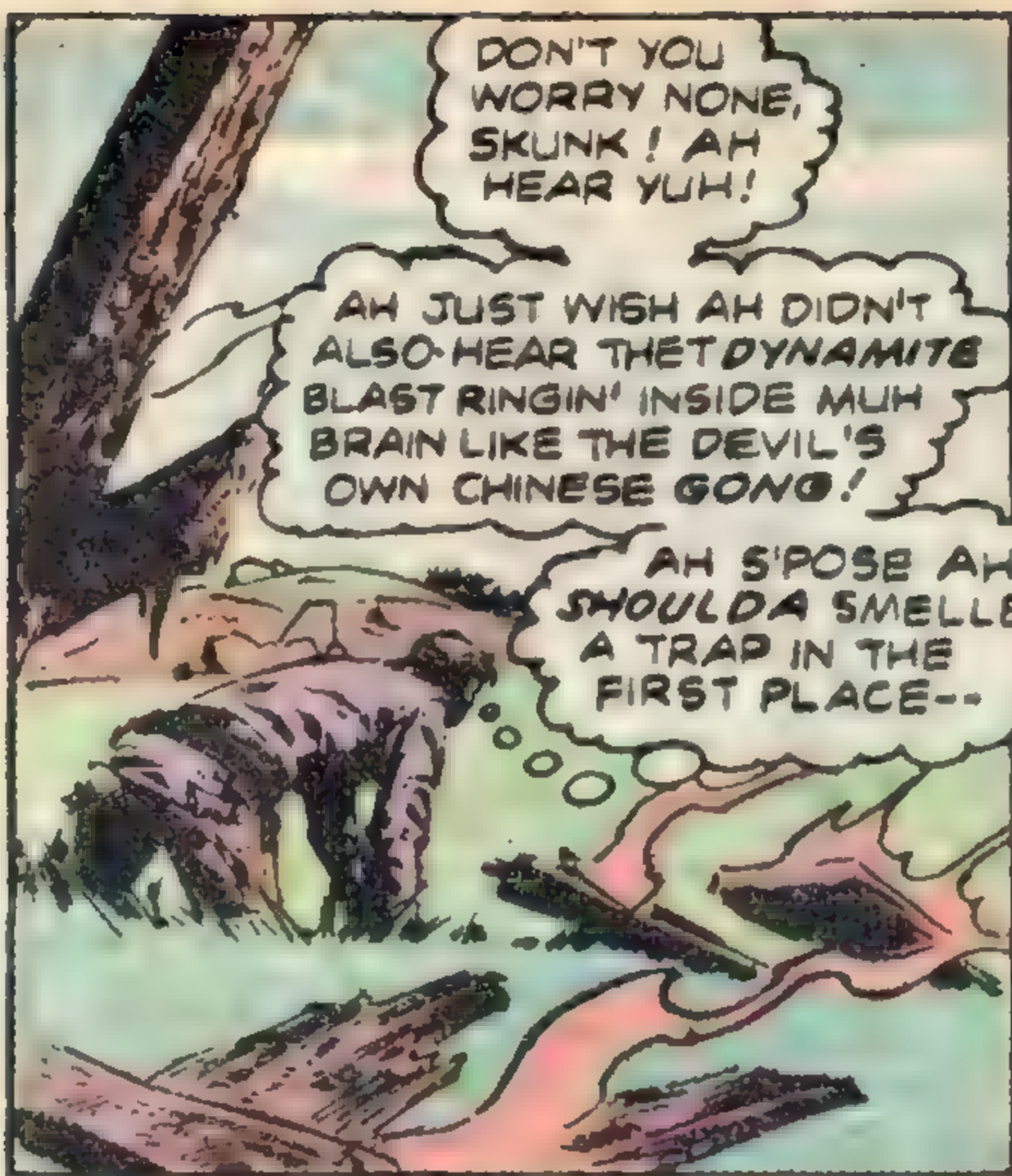
*WHEN THEY KIDNAPPED HIM FROM THE HEX FARM IN JH #52, THE OUTLAWS MISTAKENLY ASSUMED THAT 12-YEAR-OLD PETEY FOSTER WAS JONAH'S OWN SON. -ME.



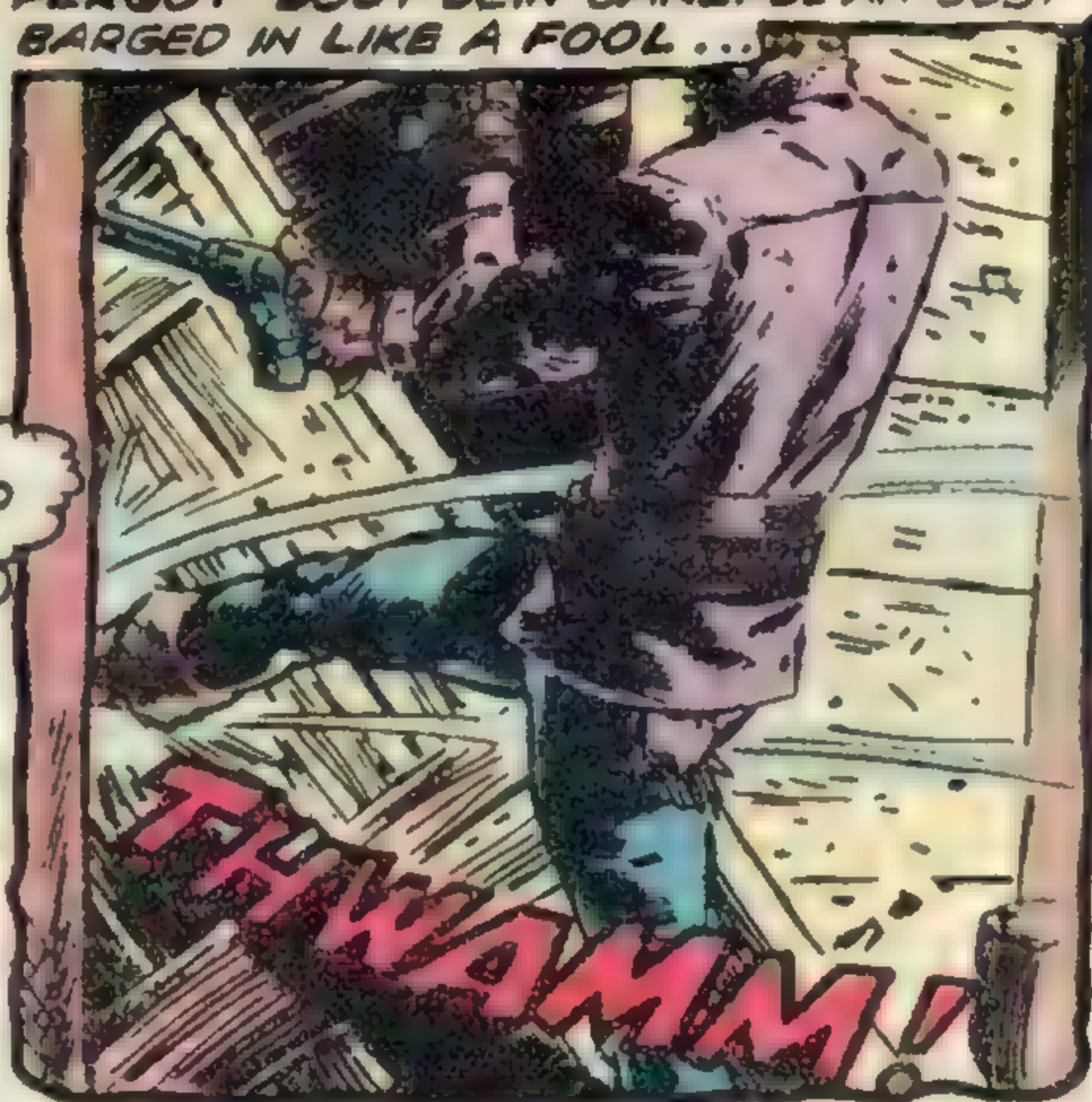
DON'T YOU
WORRY NONE,
SKUNK! AH
HEAR YUH!

AH JUST WISH AH DIDN'T
ALSO HEAR THET DYNAMITE
BLAST RINGIN' INSIDE MUH
BRAIN LIKE THE DEVIL'S
OWN CHINESE GONG!

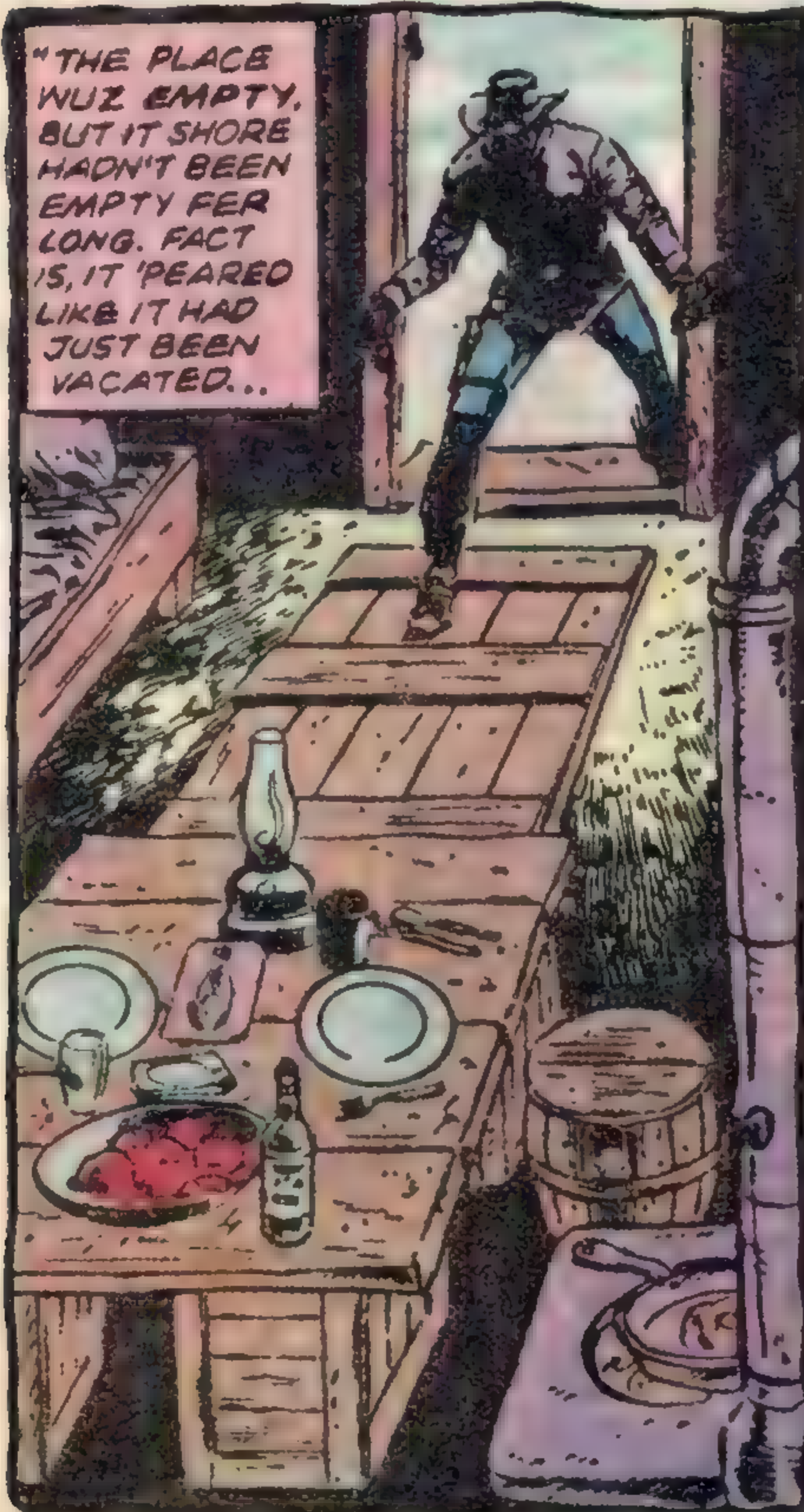
AH S'POSE AH
SHOULDA SMELLED
A TRAP IN THE
FIRST PLACE--



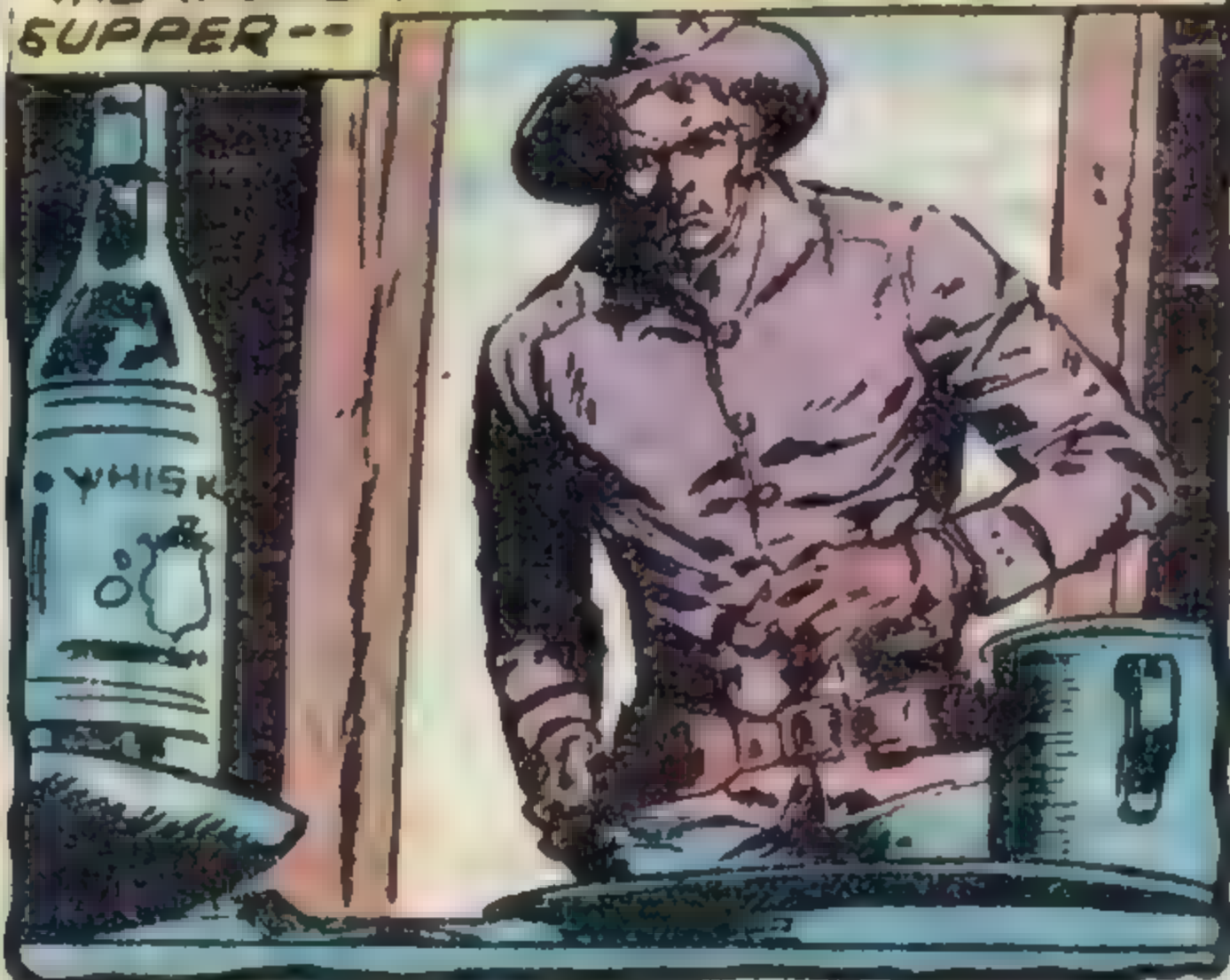
"--BUT AH WUZ SO ALL-FIRED ANXIOUS
BOUT FINDIN' PETEY, THET AH PLUMB
FERGOT 'BOUT BEIN' CAREFUL AN' JUST
BARGED IN LIKE A FOOL..."



"THE PLACE
WUZ EMPTY,
BUT IT SHORE
HADN'T BEEN
EMPTY FER
LONG. FACT
IS, IT 'PEARED
LIKE IT HAD
JUST BEEN
VACATED..."

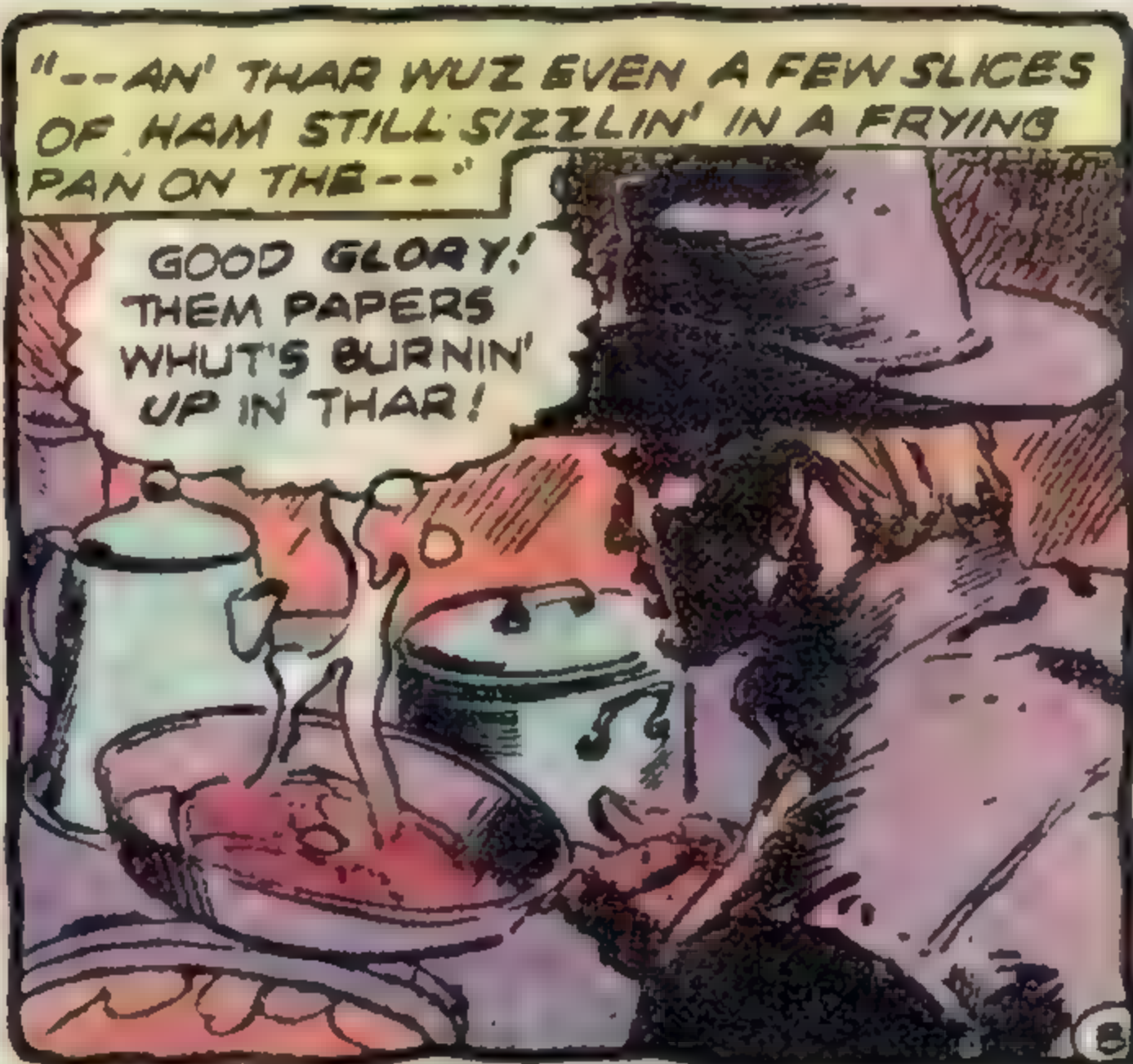


"THE TABLE WUZ ALL LAID AN' SET FER
SUPPER--

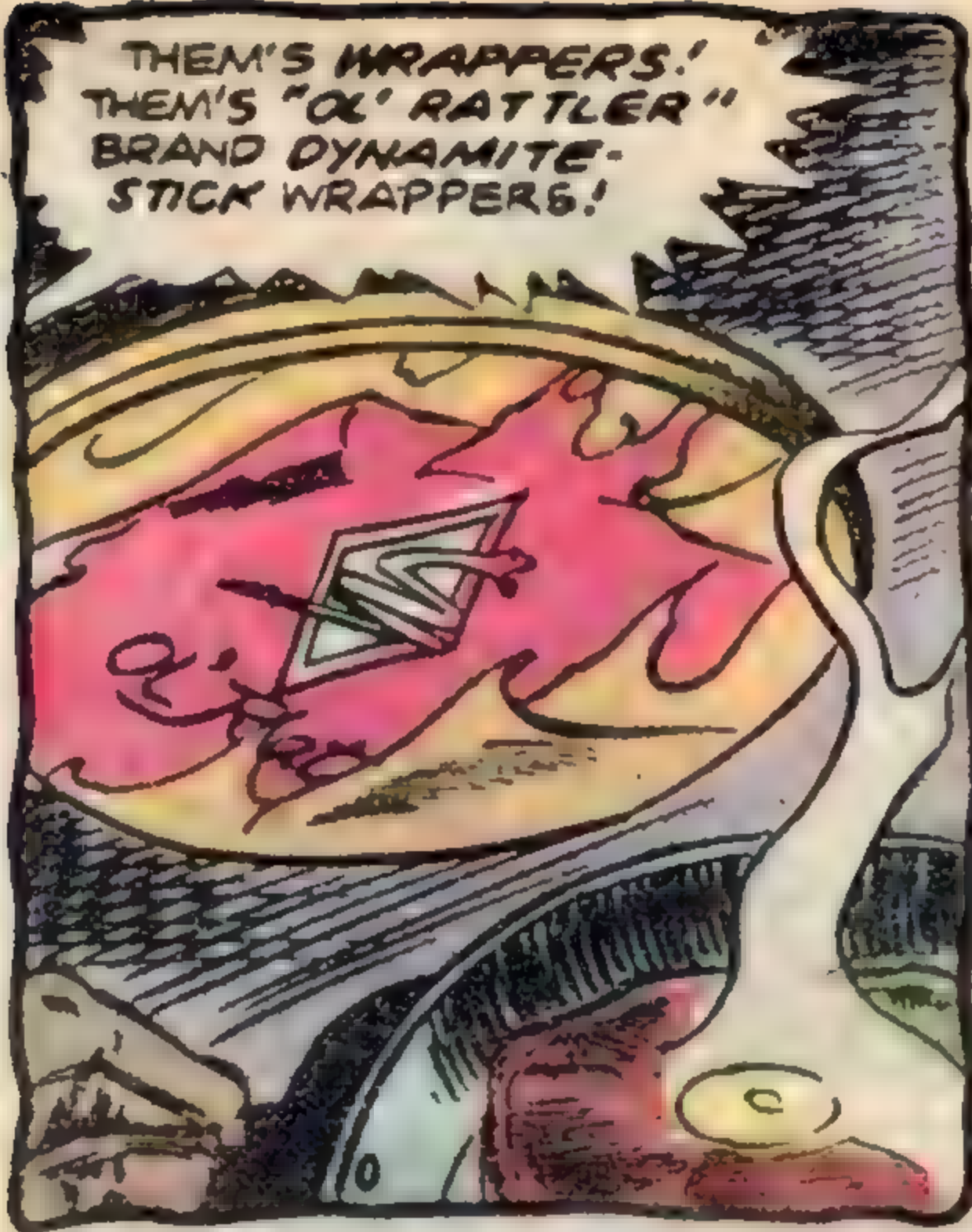


"--AN' THAR WUZ EVEN A FEW SLICES
OF HAM STILL SIZZLIN' IN A FRYING
PAN ON THE--"

GOOD GLORY!
THEM PAPERS
WHUT'S BURNIN'
UP IN THAR!



THEM'S WRAPPERS!
THEM'S "OL' RATTLER"
BRAND DYNAMITE-
STICK WRAPPERS!



BUT WHUT IN TARNATION 'VE THOSE
OWLHOOTS BEEN DOIN' MESSIN'
'ROUND WITH--

UH-UH!
NEVER MIND!



AH BET
AH KIN
GUESS!

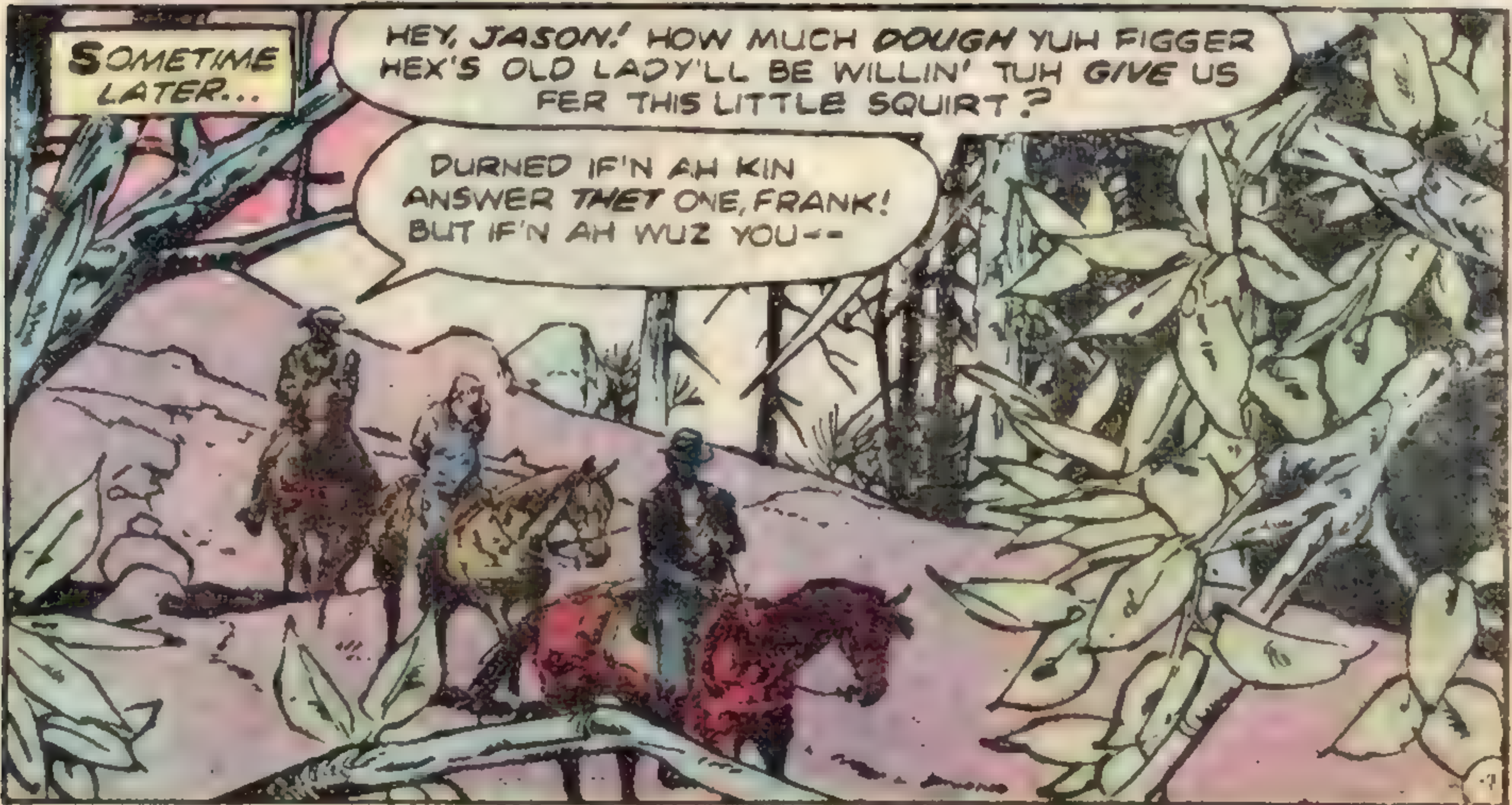
BA-ROOONNN!

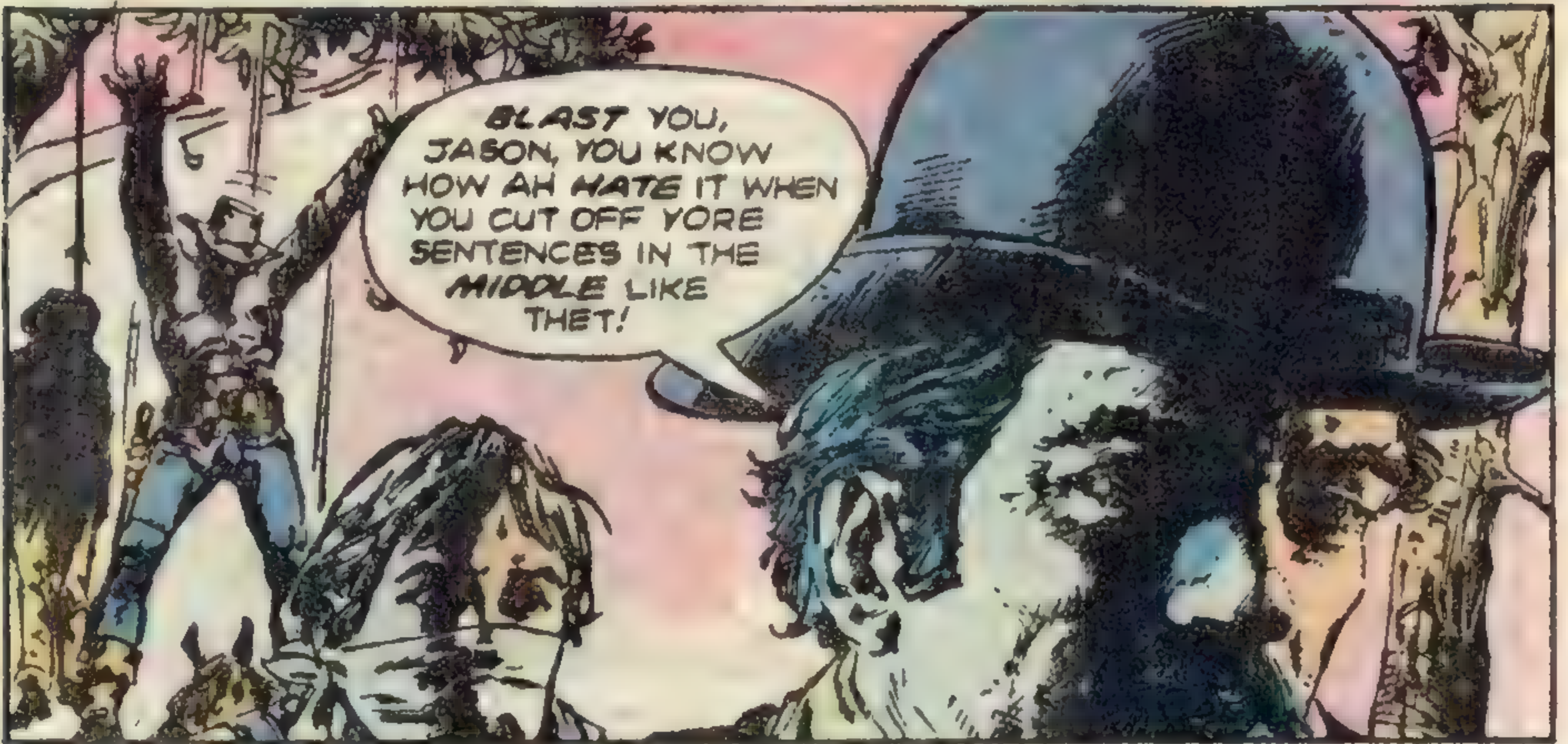


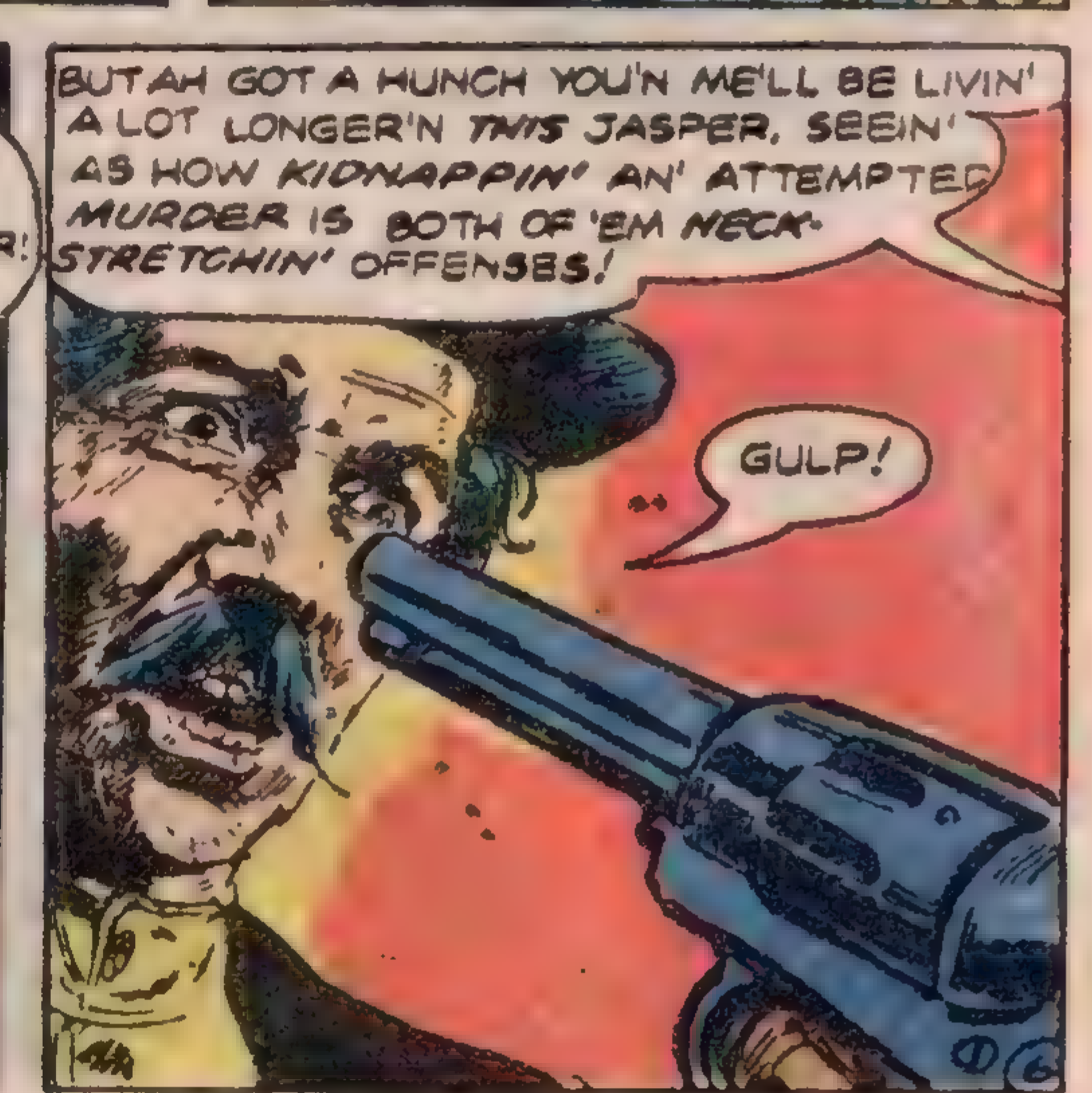
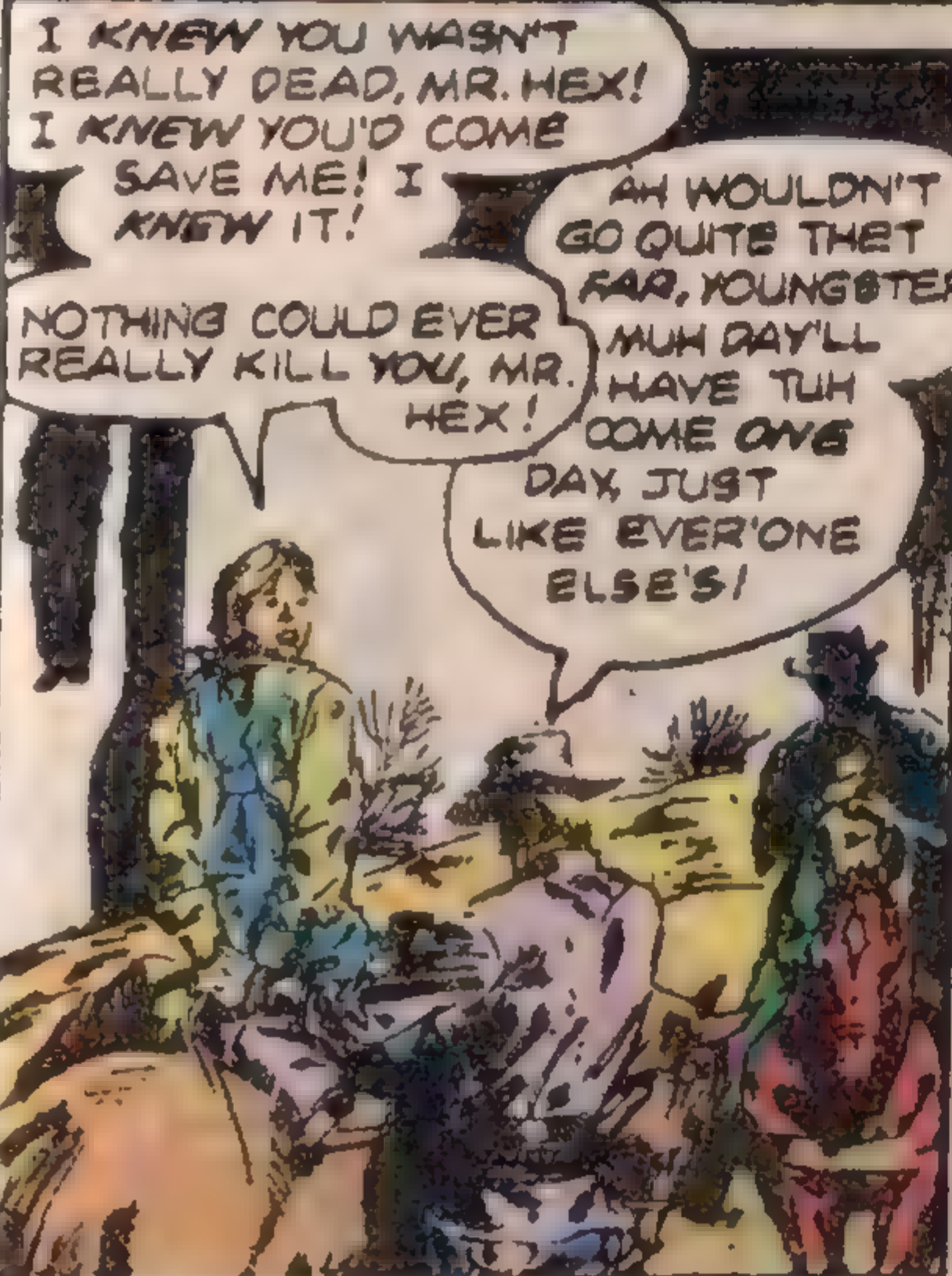
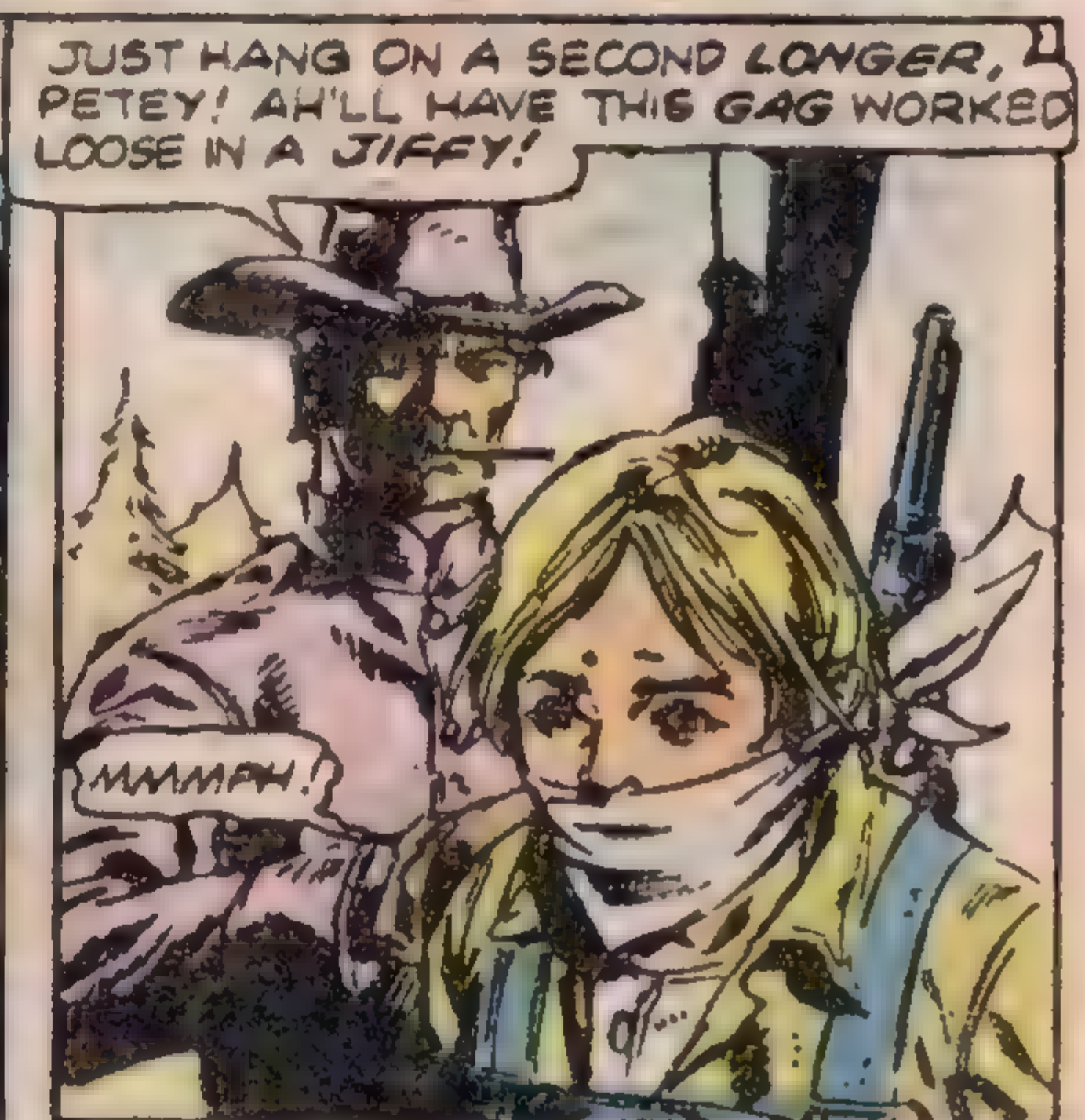
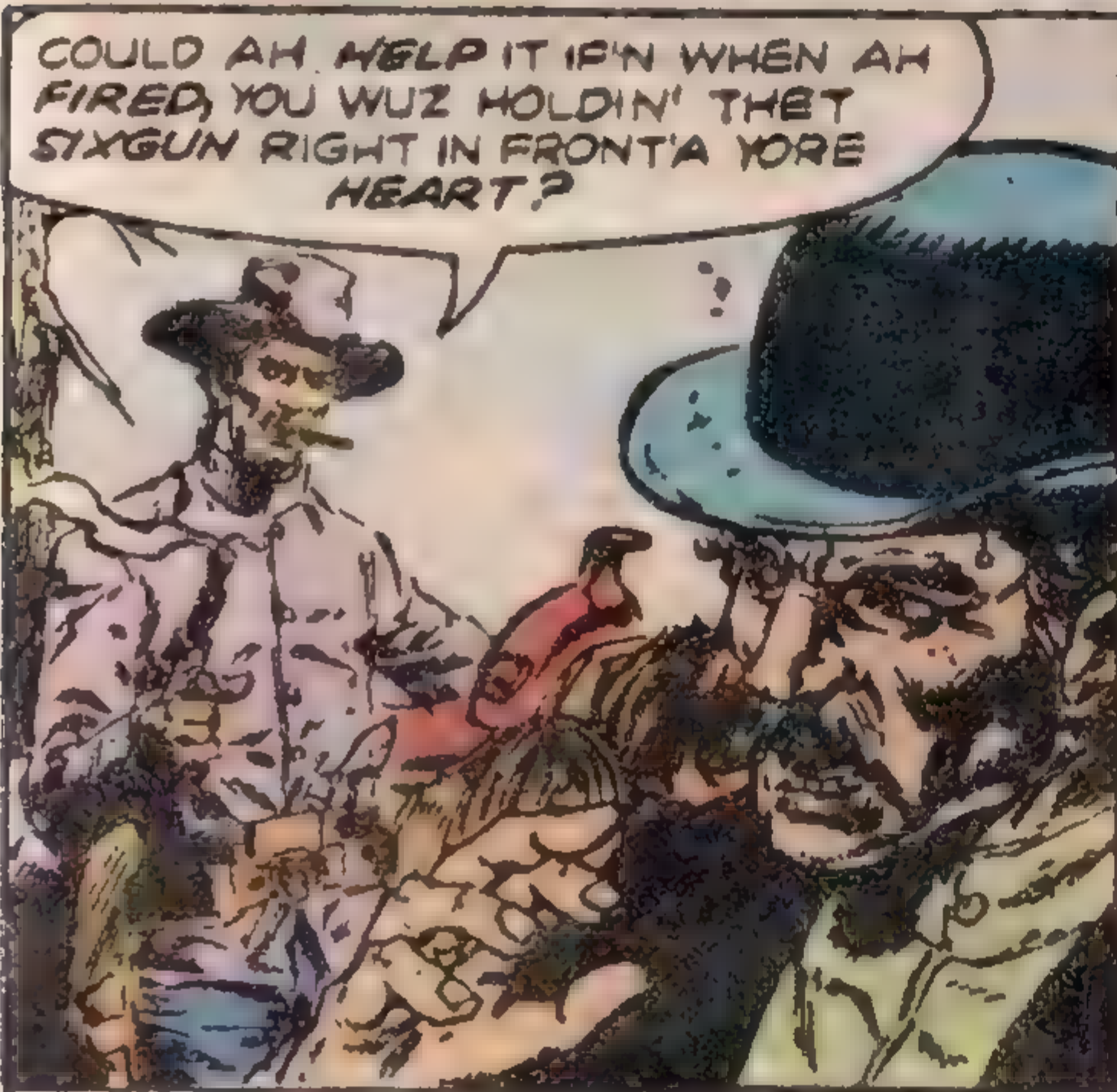
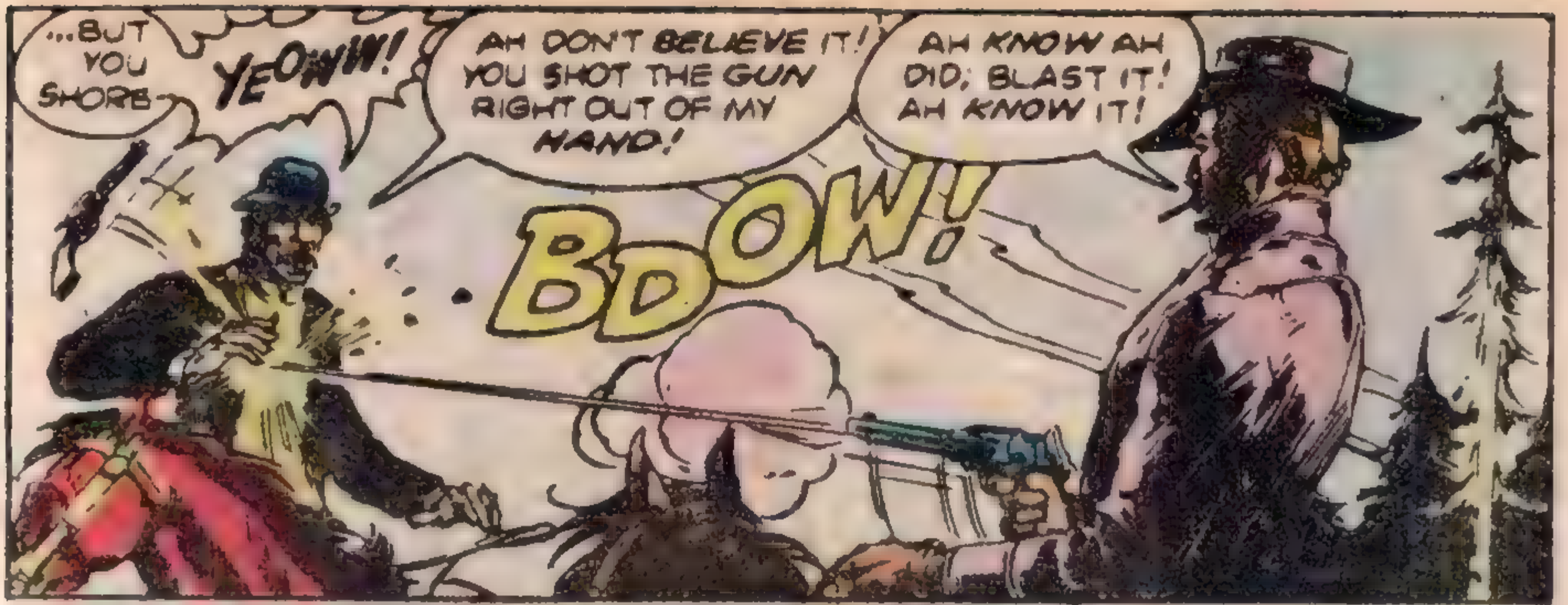
SOMETIME
LATER...

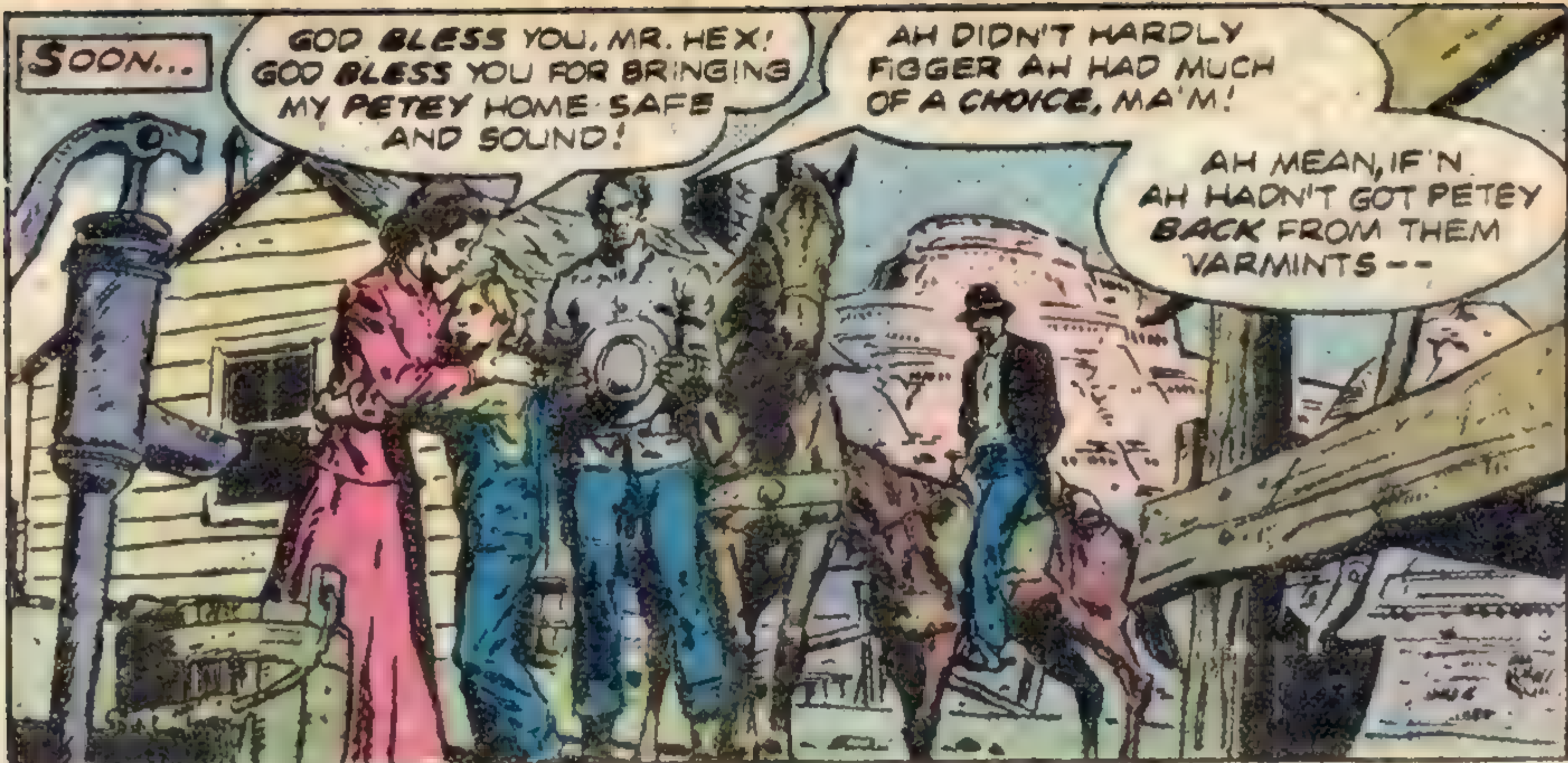
HEY, JASON! HOW MUCH DOUGH YUH FIGGER
HEX'S OLD LADY'LL BE WILLIN' TUH GIVE US
FER THIS LITTLE SQUIRT?

DURNED IF'N AH KIN
ANSWER THET ONE, FRANK!
BUT IF'N AH WUZ YOU--







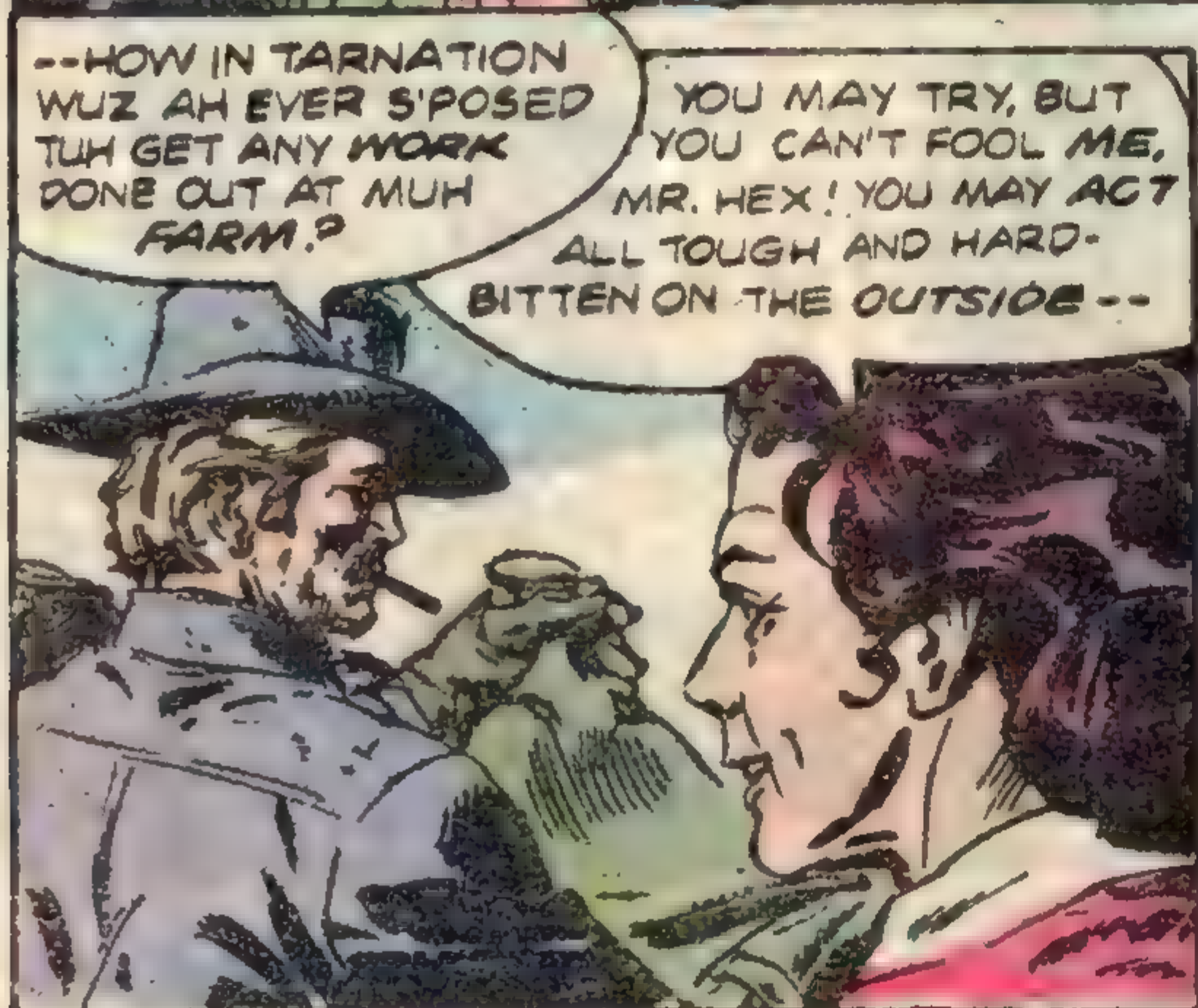


SOON...

GOD BLESS YOU, MR. HEX!
GOD BLESS YOU FOR BRINGING
MY PETEY HOME SAFE
AND SOUND!

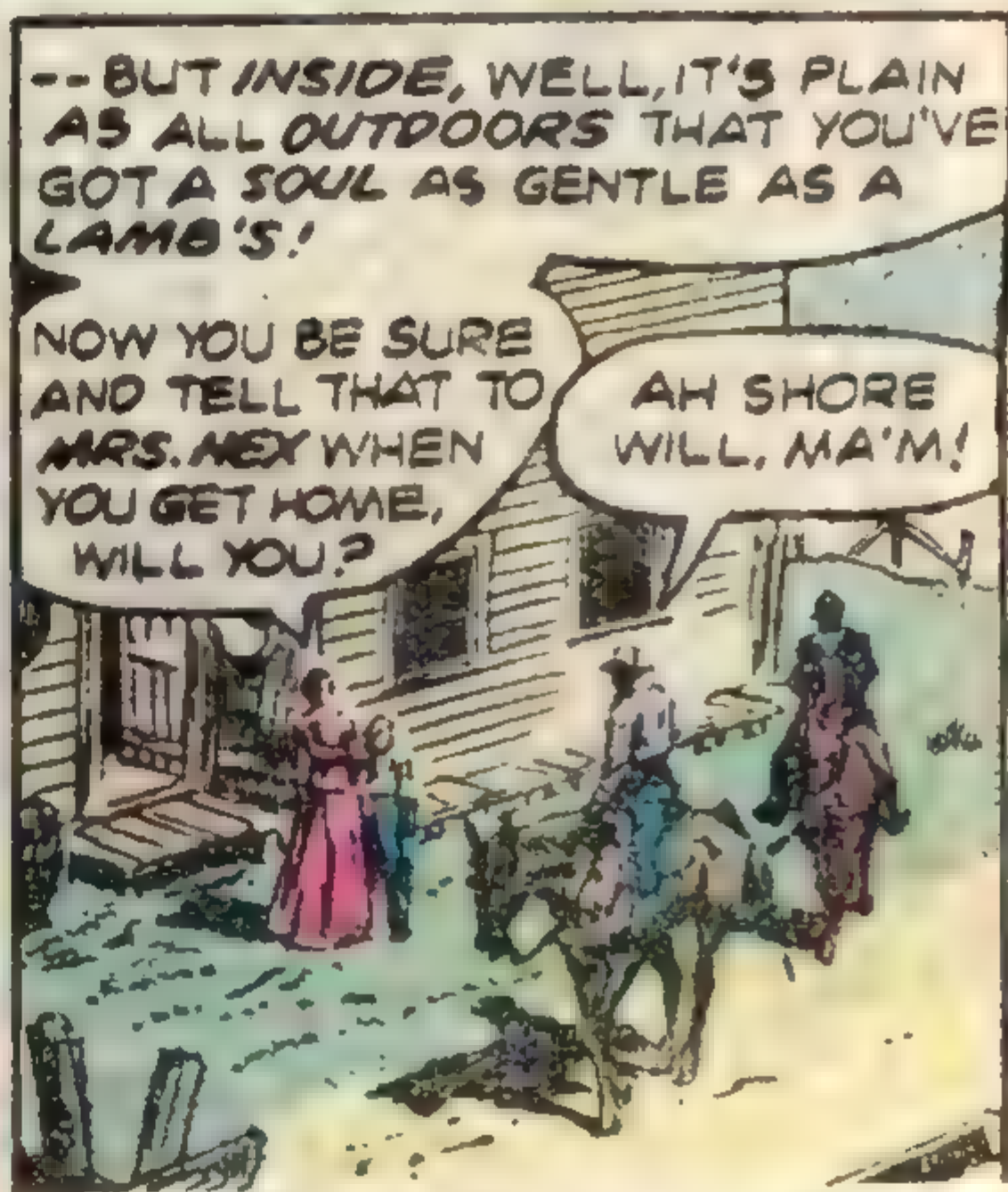
AH DIDN'T HARDLY
FIGGER AH HAD MUCH
OF A CHOICE, MA'M!

AH MEAN, IF 'N
AH HADN'T GOT PETEY
BACK FROM THEM
VARMINTS --



--HOW IN TARNATION
WUZ AH EVER S'POSED
TUH GET ANY WORK
DONE OUT AT MUH
FARM?

YOU MAY TRY, BUT
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME,
MR. HEX! YOU MAY ACT
ALL TOUGH AND HARD-
BITTEN ON THE OUTSIDE --



--BUT INSIDE, WELL, IT'S PLAIN
AS ALL OUTDOORS THAT YOU'VE
GOT A SOUL AS GENTLE AS A
LAMB'S!

NOW YOU BE SURE
AND TELL THAT TO
MRS. HEX WHEN
YOU GET HOME,
WILL YOU?

AH SHORE
WILL, MA'M!

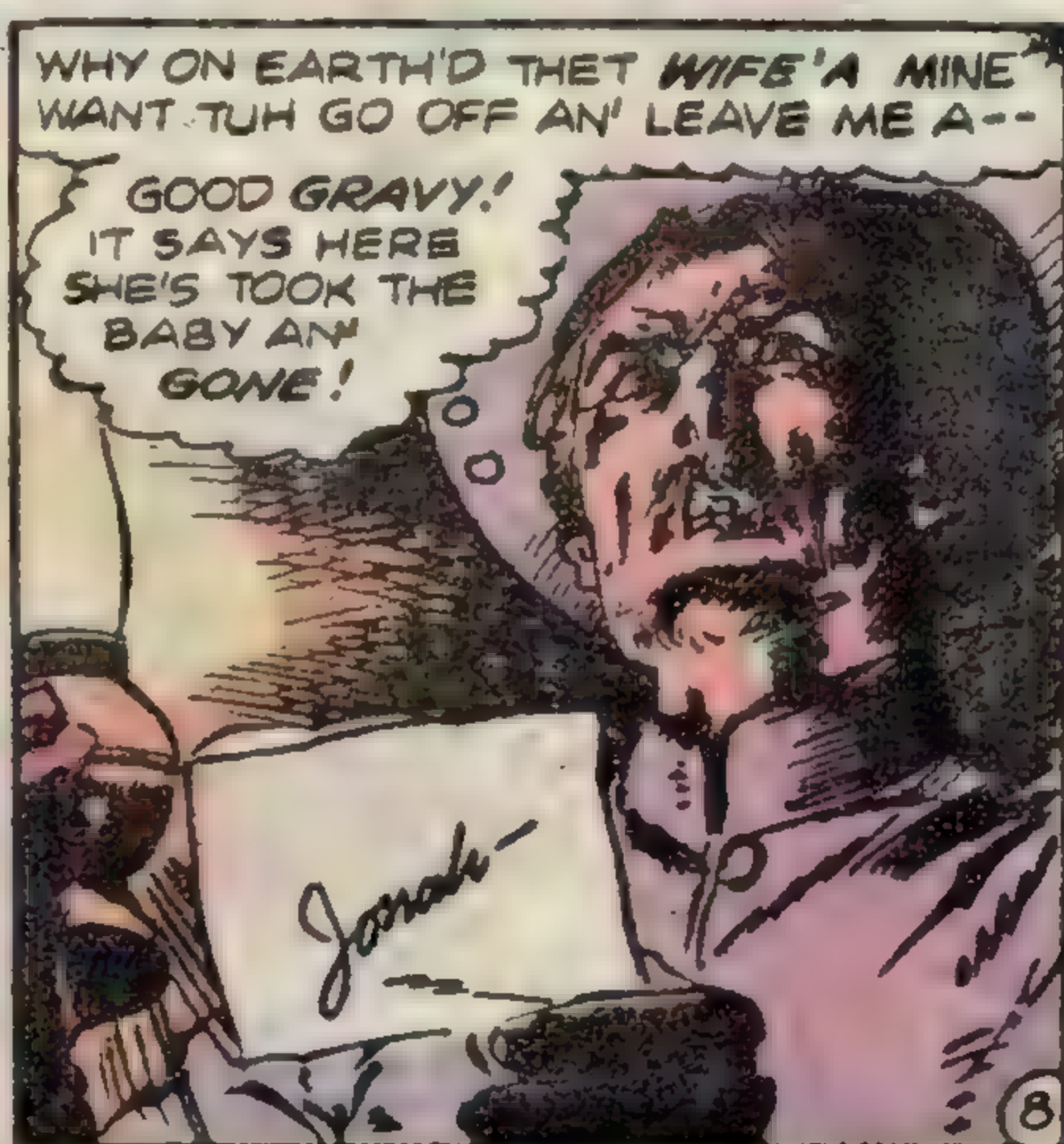
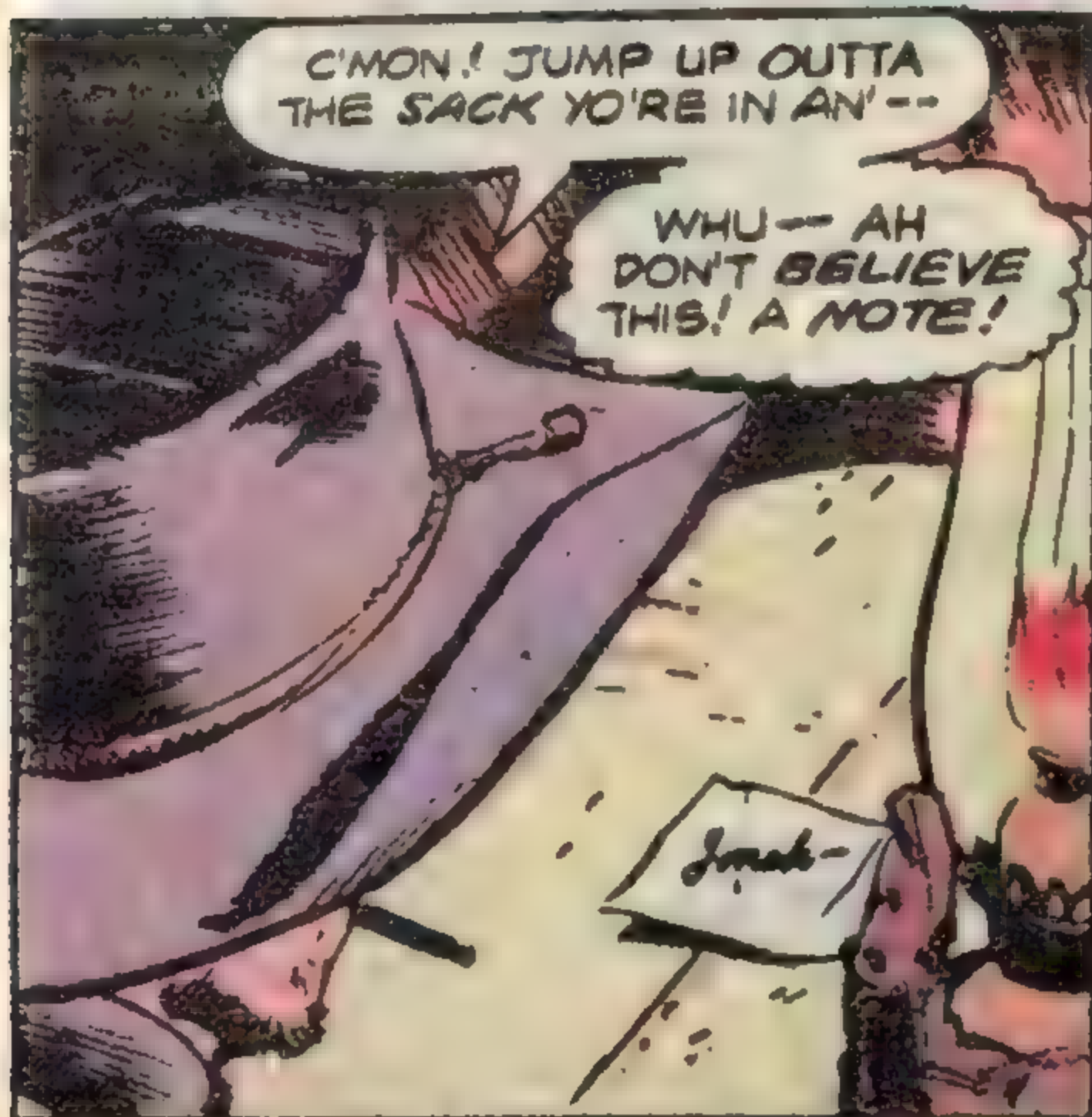
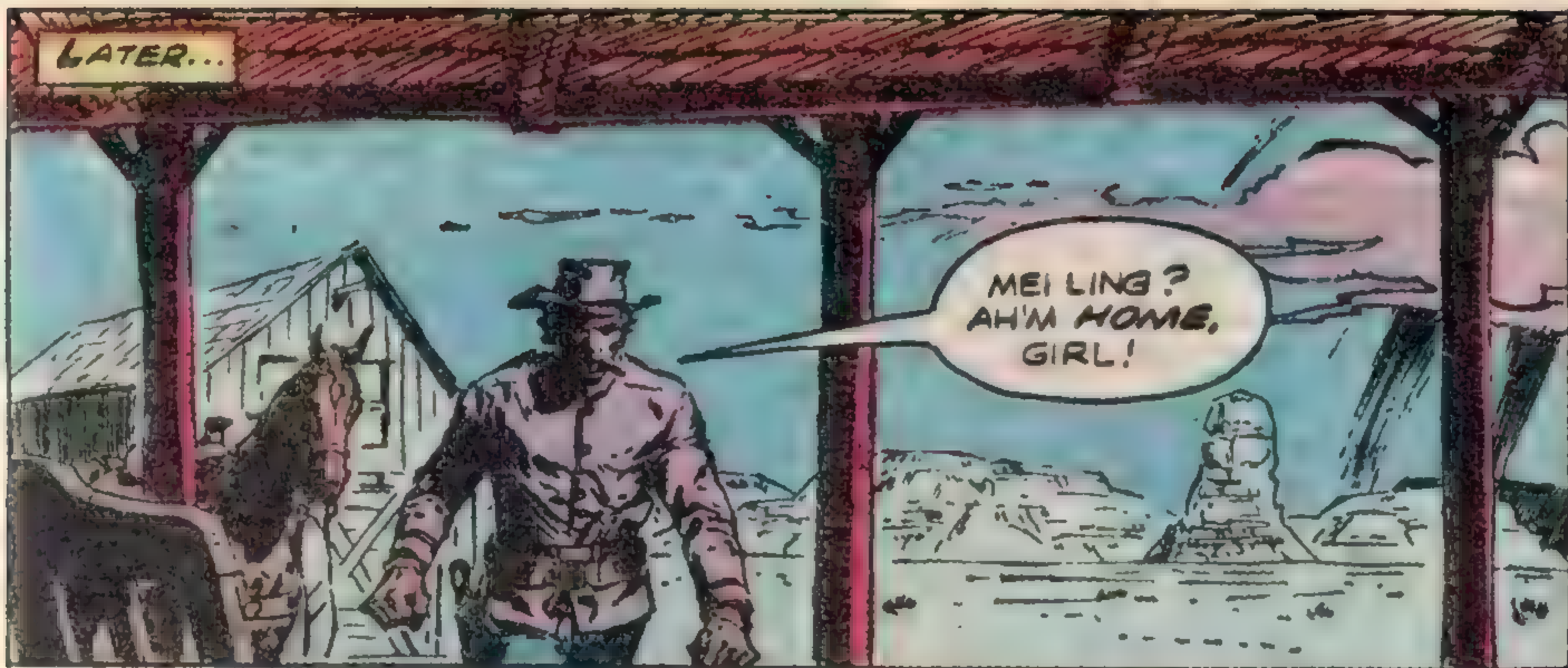
PROVIDIN' AH STILL GOT A MRS. HEX AT
HOME BY THE TIME AH DROP THIS
O'VLHOOT OFF AT THE SHERIFF'S
OFFICE AN' GET ON BACK THAR!

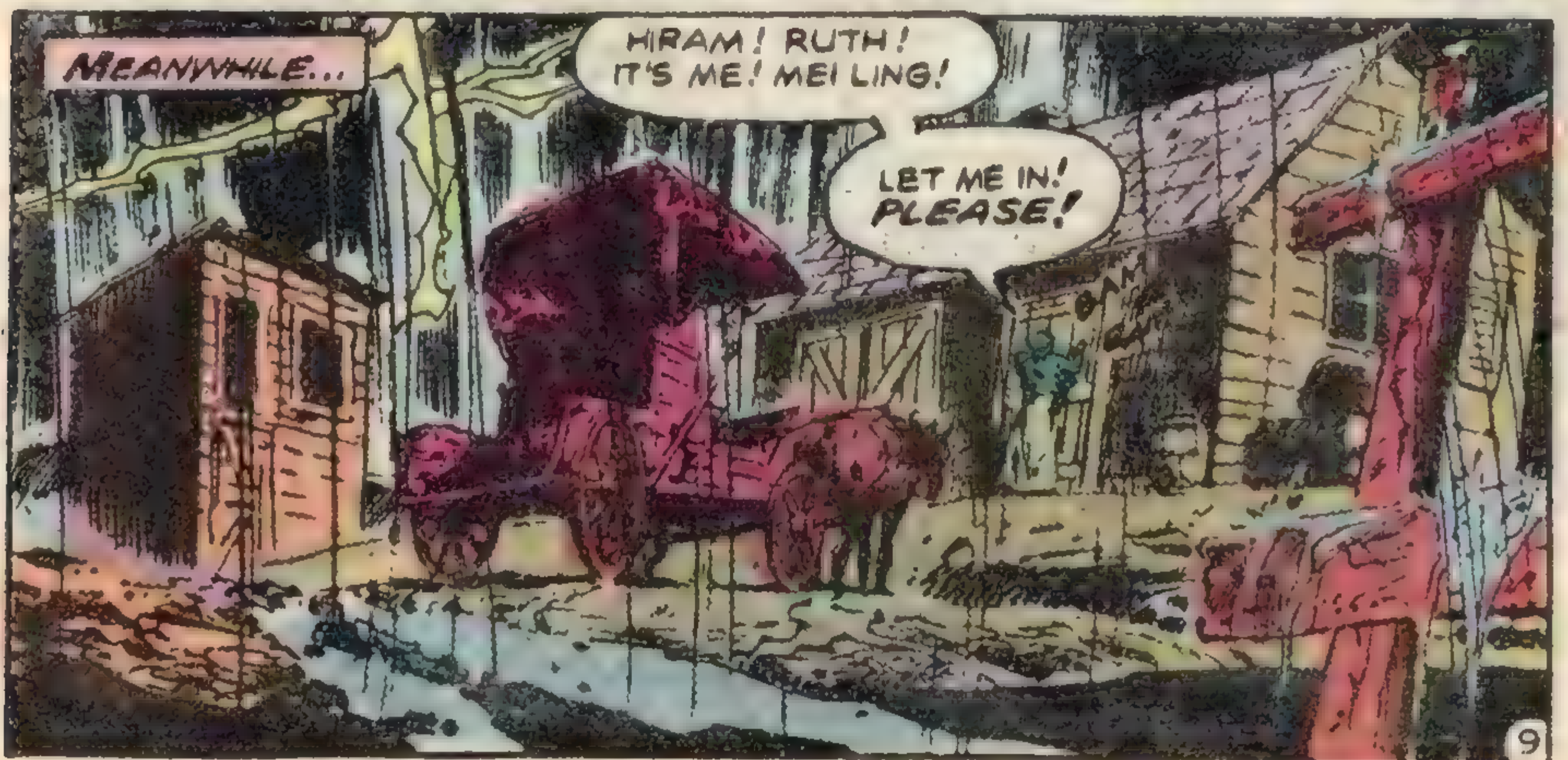
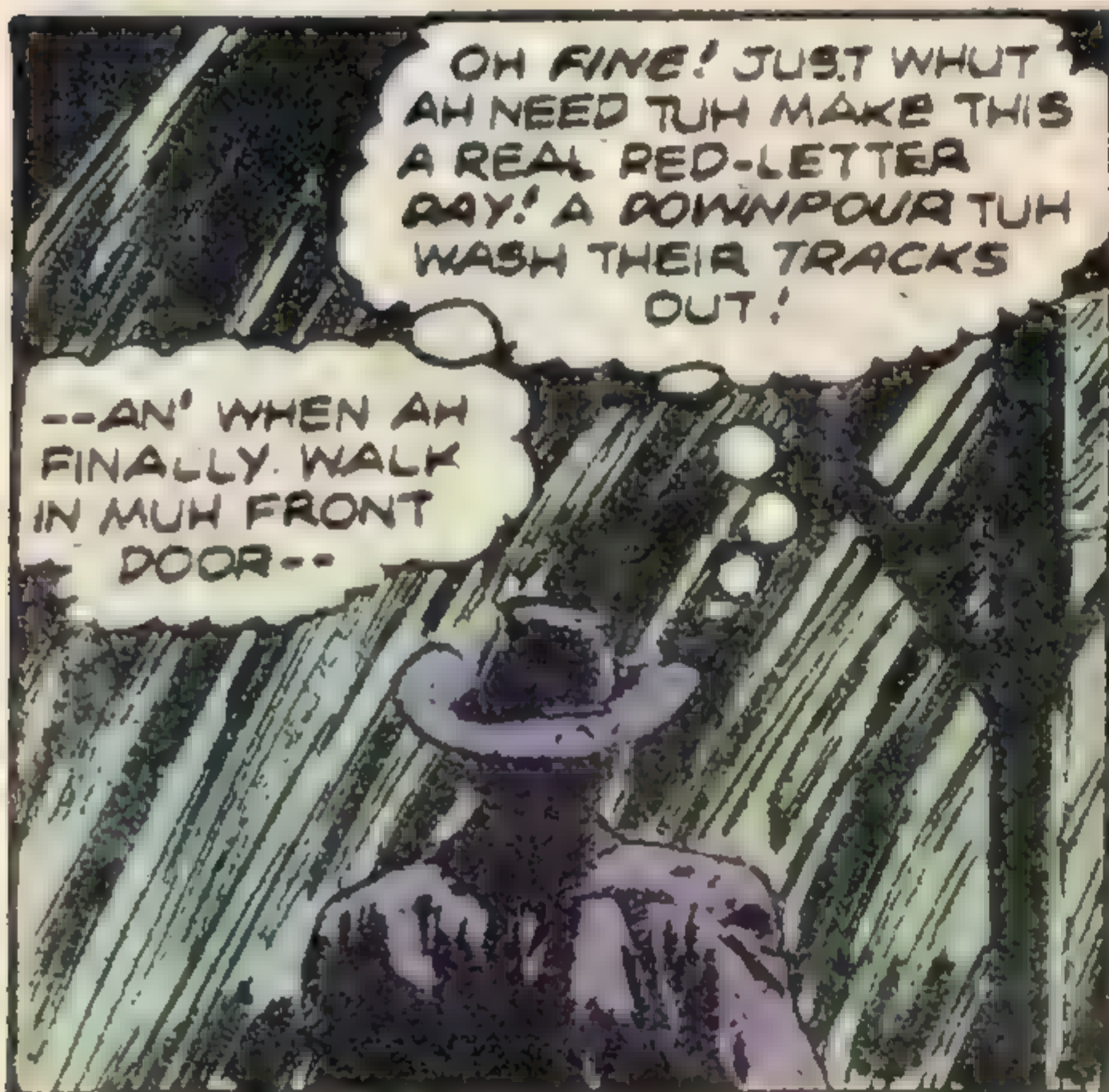
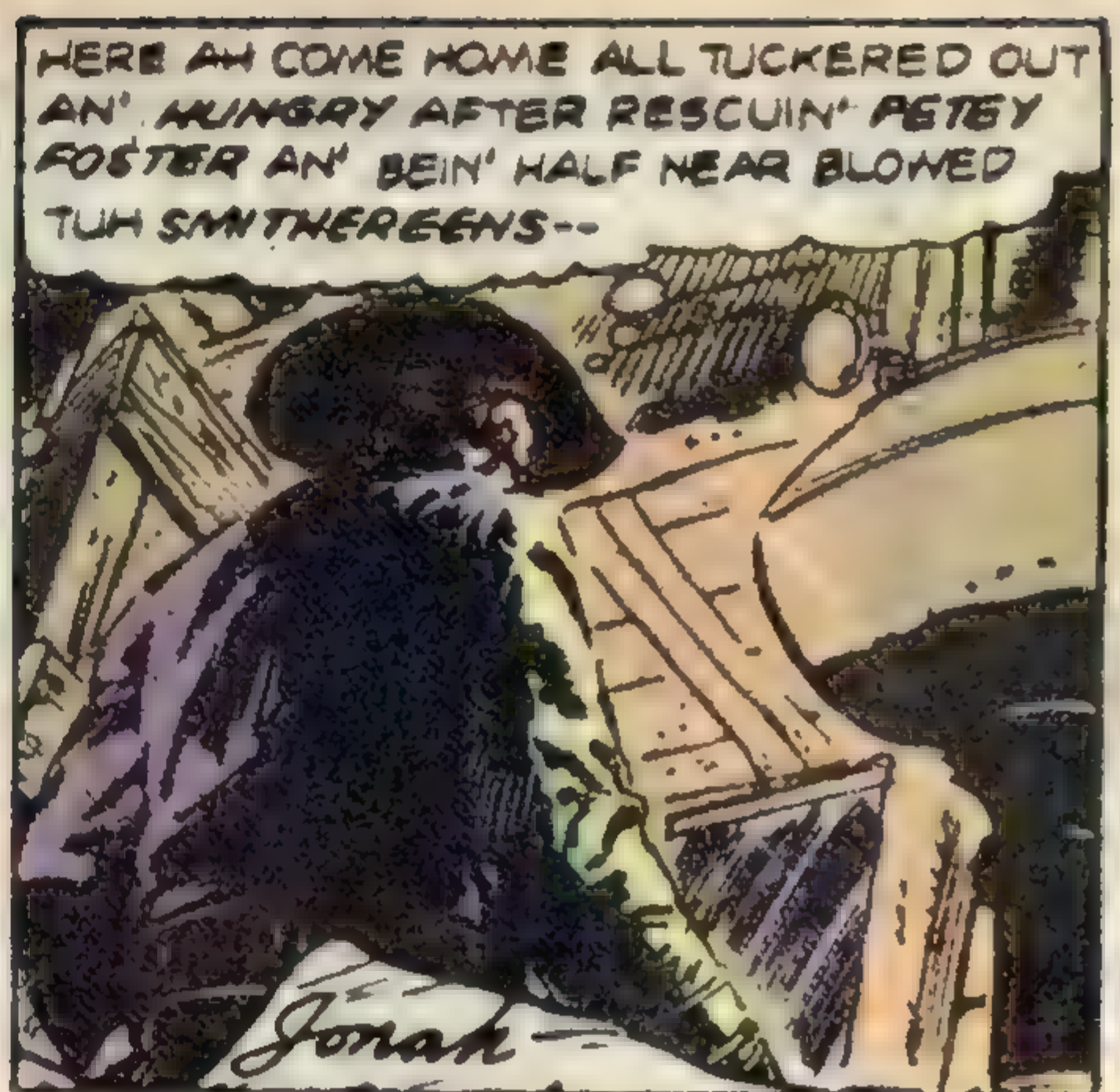


SHE WUZ AWFUL ANGRY AT ME
FER STRAPPIN' ON MUH SIXGUNS AN'
RIDIN' OFF TUH FIND PETEY LIKE AH DONE!



AH JUST HOPE
AH KIN MAKE HER
UNDERSTAND THET
AH ONLY DONE WHUT
AH HAD TUH DO!





GOOD HEAVENS, MEI LING!
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU
DOING OUT IN THAT AWFUL
RAINSTORM?



HIRAM! GO FETCH SOME BLANKETS FOR
MEI LING AND THE BABY! THE BOTH OF
'EM LOOK LIKE THEY'RE SOAKED
THROUGH TO THE SKIN!

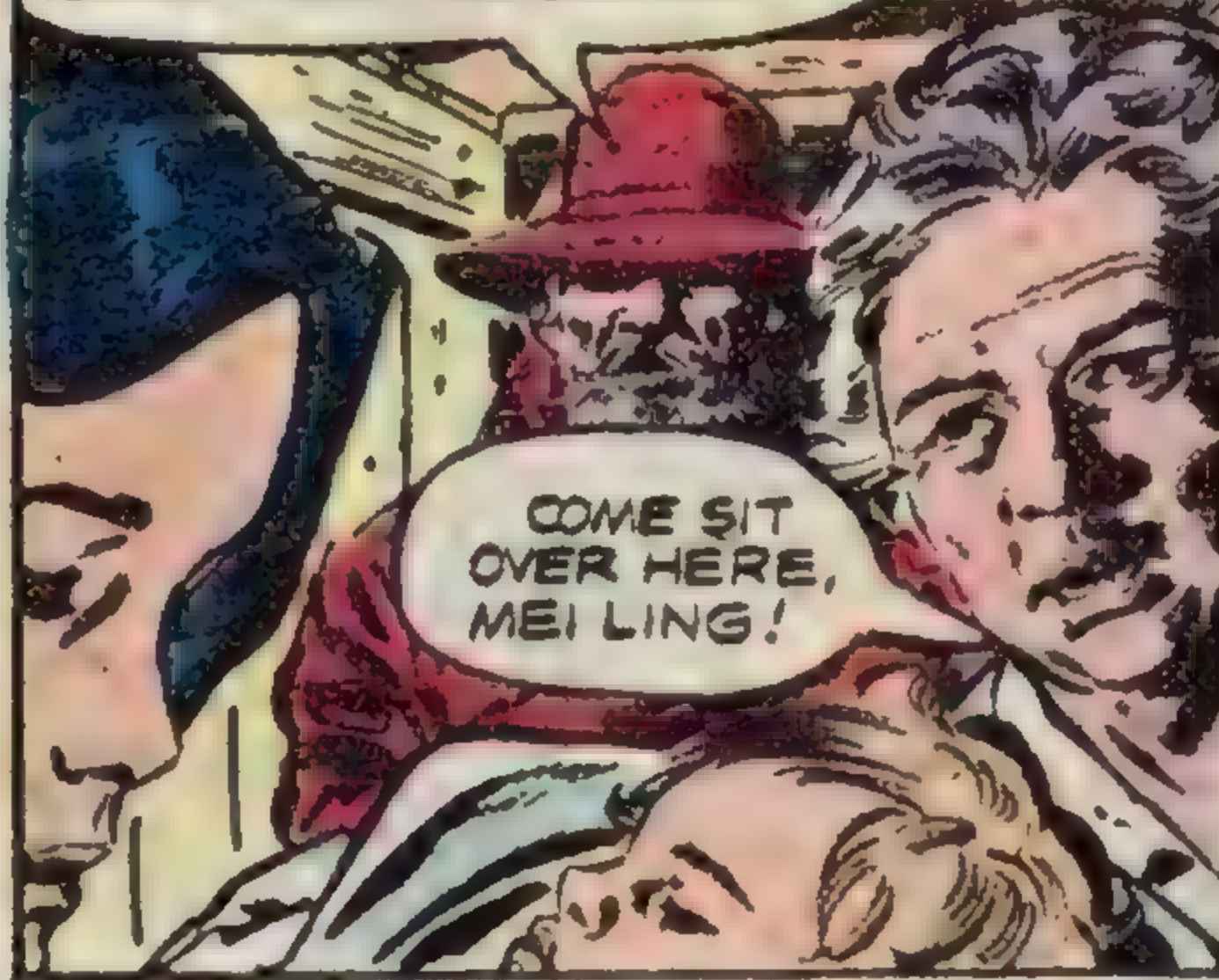


HERE YOU GO,
MEI LING!
AND AH'VE
GOT ANOTHER
BLANKET
HERE FER
THE BABY!

NOW YOU JUST SET
RIGHT DOWN IN
FRONT OF THE
FIREPLACE AN' GET
YORESELF ALL WARM
AN' COMFY!



AH'M GONNA RUN OUTSIDE
AN' GET THE BUCKBOARD'A
YORES INTUH THE BARN!



COME SIT
OVER HERE,
MEI LING!

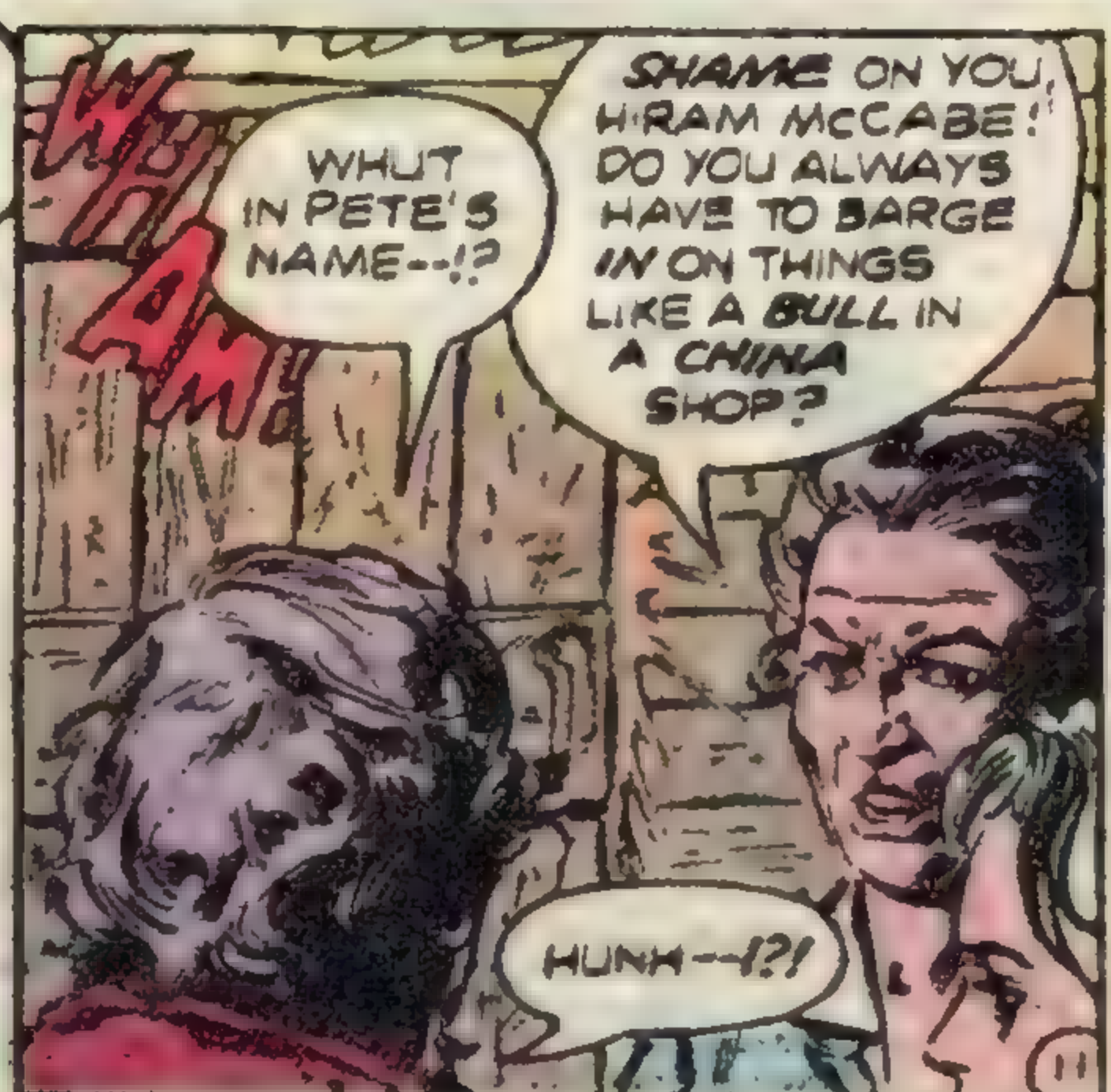
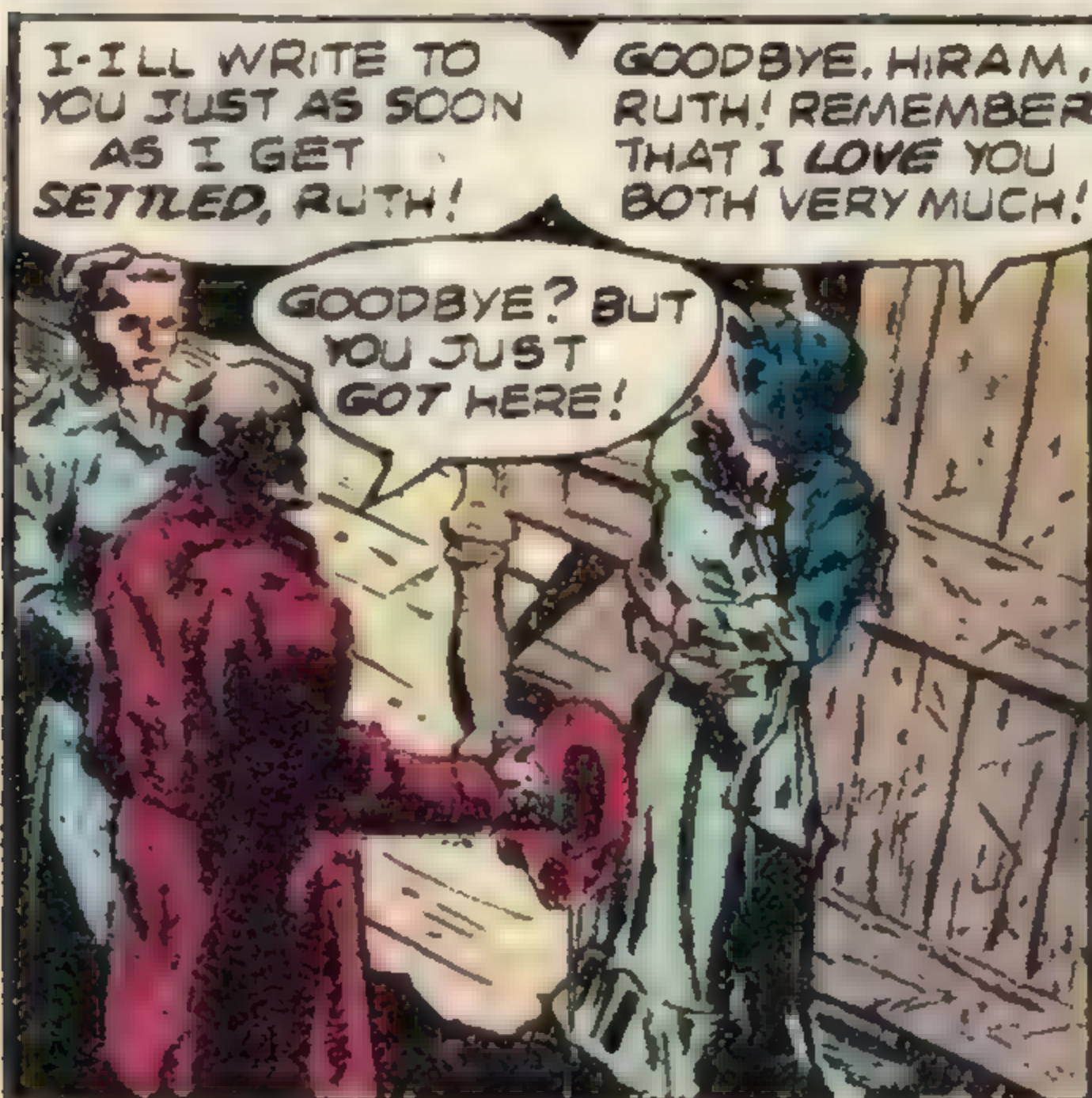
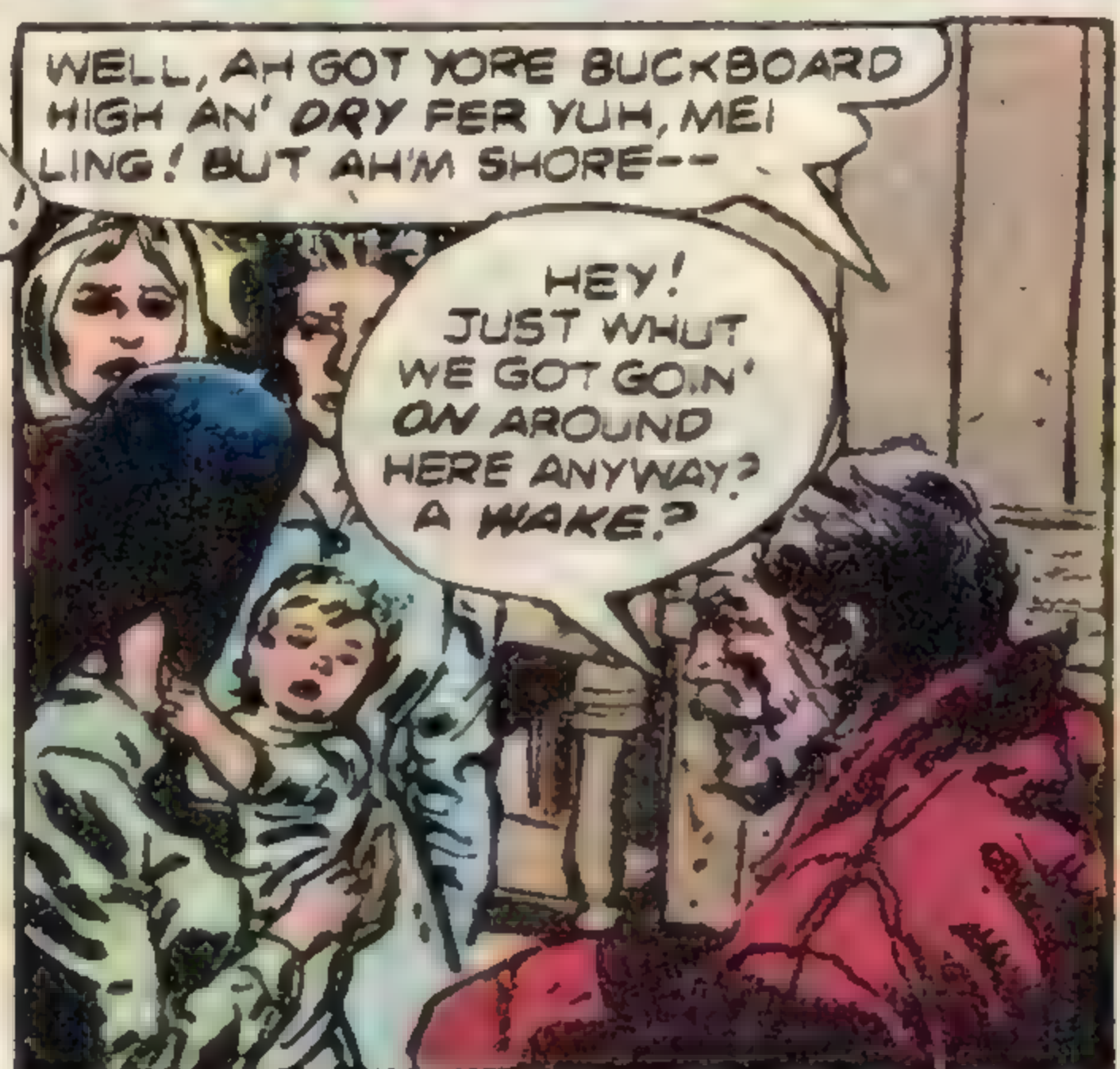
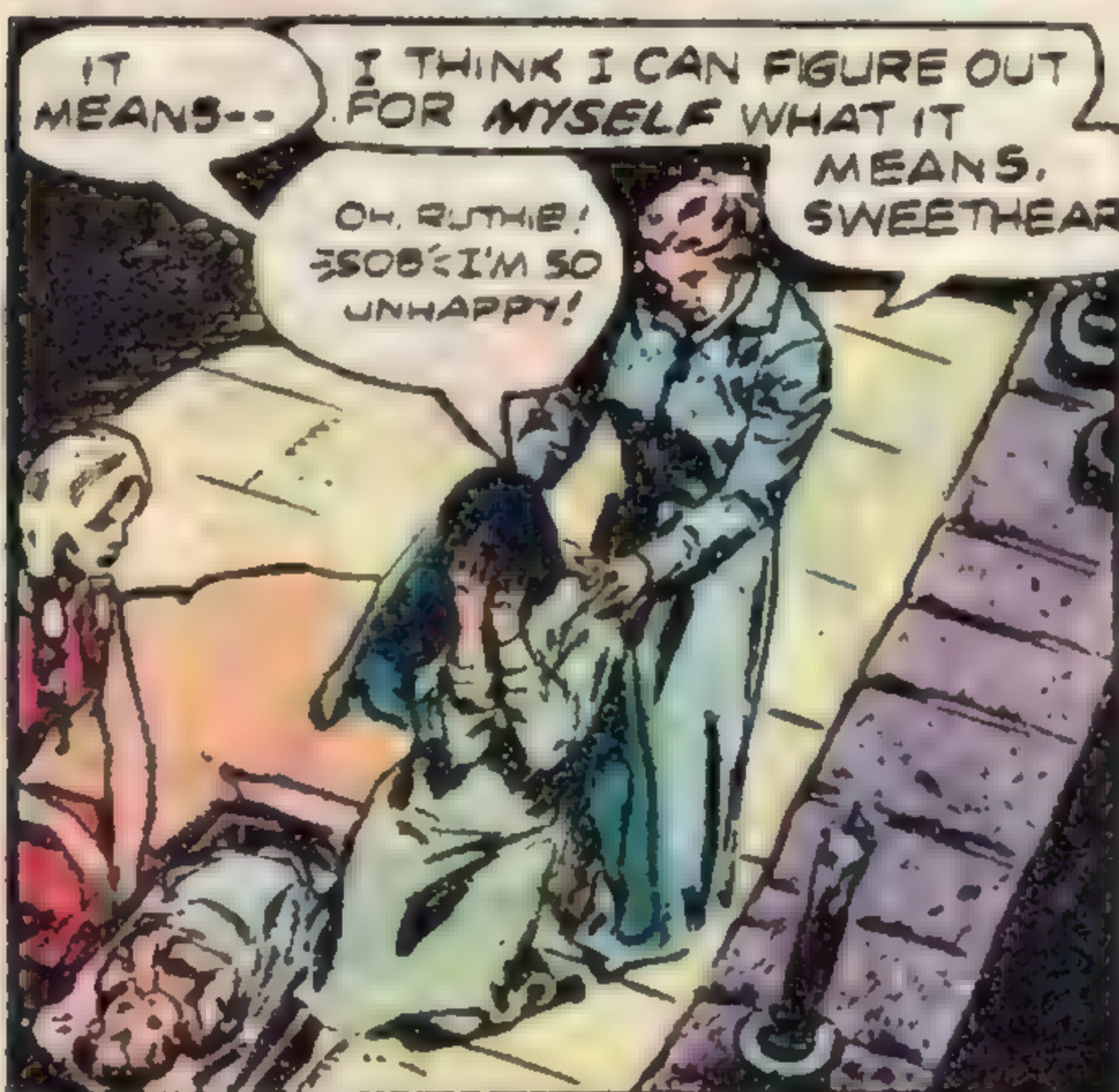
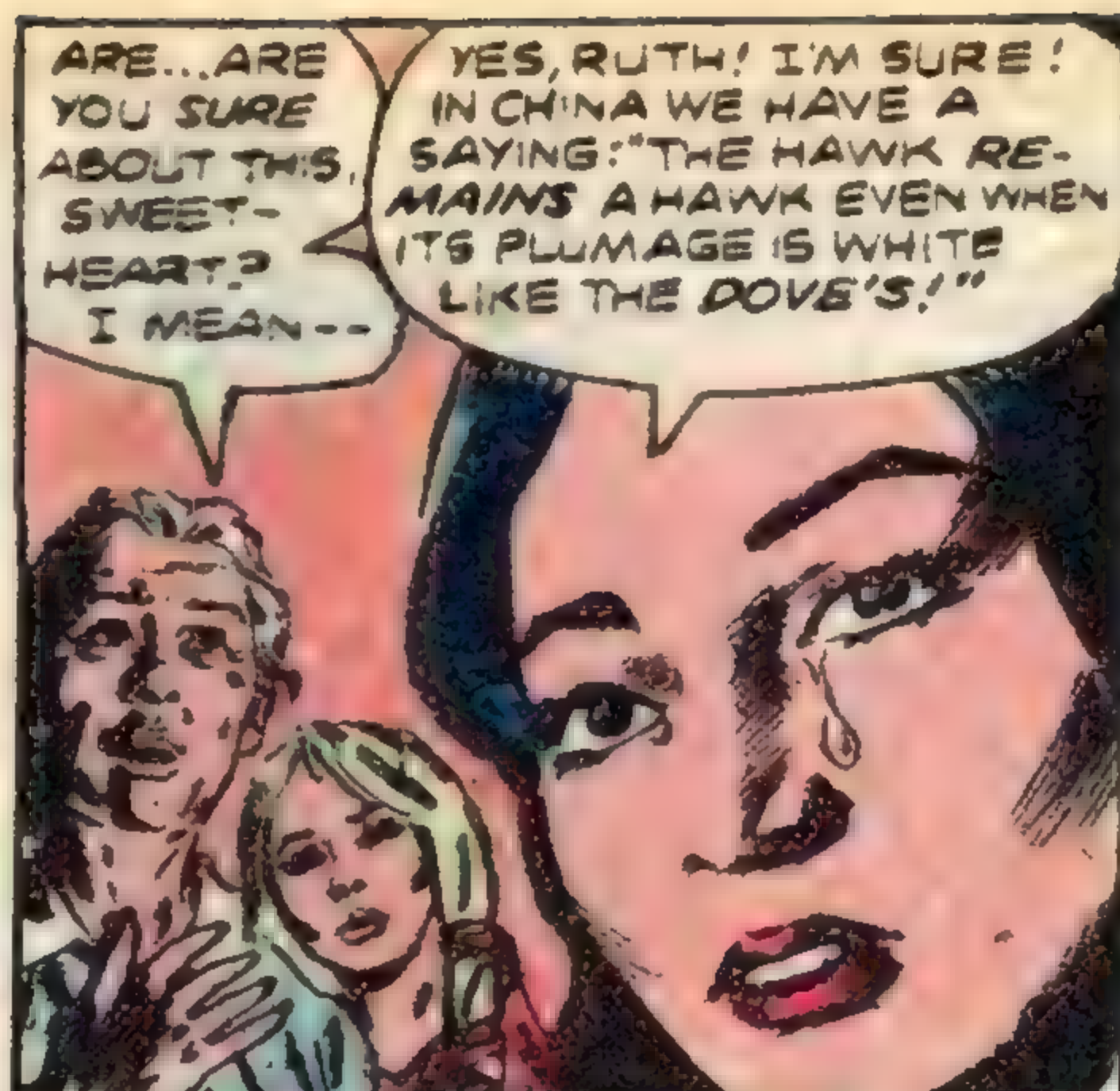
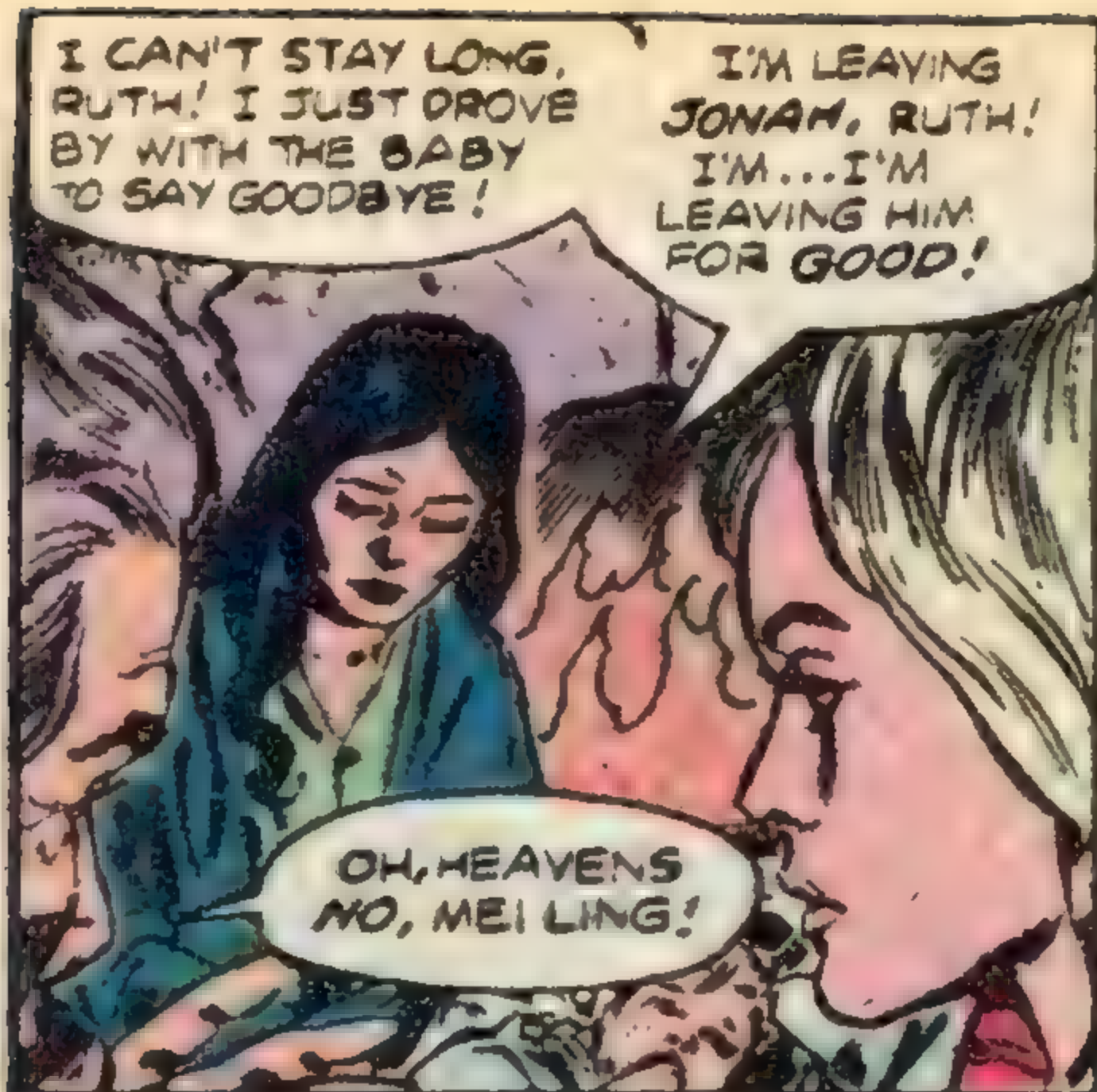
THERE'S
SOMEBODY
I'D LIKE YOU
TO MEET!

THIS HERE'S EMMYLOU HARTLEY, MEI LING!
EMMYLOU'S BEEN STAYING ON HERE WITH US
EVER SINCE YOUR JONAH RESCUED HER FROM
A PARTY OF CROWS WHILE HE WAS OUT HUNTIN'
FOR ELK IN THE MOUNTAINS!*



I'M... I'M
PLEASED TO MEET
YOU, MRS. HEX!

*IN JONAH HEX #50.-M.F.



BLAST! AH KNOWED
IT WOULDN'T BE NO
USE AN' IT SHORE
'NUFF WUZNT!

WHUT WITH ALL THIS RAIN POURIN' DOWN OUTTA
THE SKY, AN ELEPHANT COULDA SLOSHED THROUGH
THESE PARTS WITHOUT LEAVIN' A TRACE, LET
ALONE A BUCKBOARD AN' A COUPLA HORSES!

MEANYHILE...

DIZZY-HEADED FEMALE! SHE'LL COME
BACK HERE SOON'S SHE GETS SOAKED
ENOUGH! AN' WHEN SHE DOES, AH'M
GONNA TAN HER HIDE FER HER!

MEANYHILE,
WHUT AH NEED'S
A DRINK!

MEBBE
EVEN SIX OR
SEVEN
DRINKS!

BEEN SAVIN' THIS HERE
BOTTLE'A MOOCH FER
JUST SUCH AN OCCASION
AS THIS ONE!

IFN IT DON'T LIQUIFY MUH
BRAIN ALTOGETHER, IT
SHORE 'NUFF OUGHTTA
EASE THE PAIN!

GLUB-
GLUB-



UGGHH!
THEY ROTGUT
SHORE DO TASTE
NASTY!



SMELLS NASTY,
TASTES NASTY!



GOT A AROMA
JUST LIKE
KEROSENE!



A MAND HAVE TUH BE
NEAR HALF-WAY CRAZY
TUH DRINK THIS STUFF!



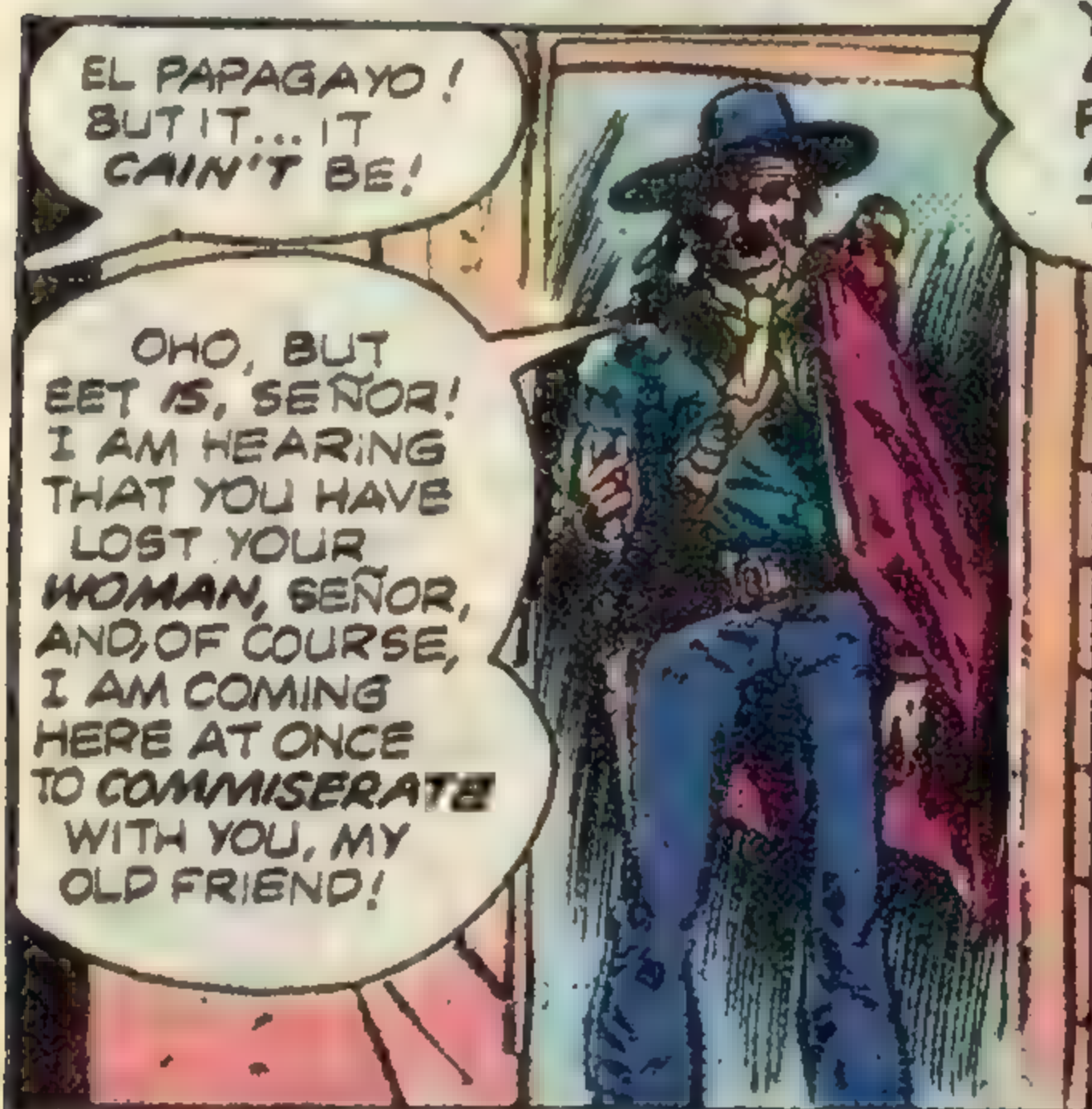
ELSEWISE HE'D--



--BE A DING-DONG--

OH HO! SO I
HAVE FINALLY
FOUND YOU AT
LAST, MY GOOD
FRIEND!

WHU--!?



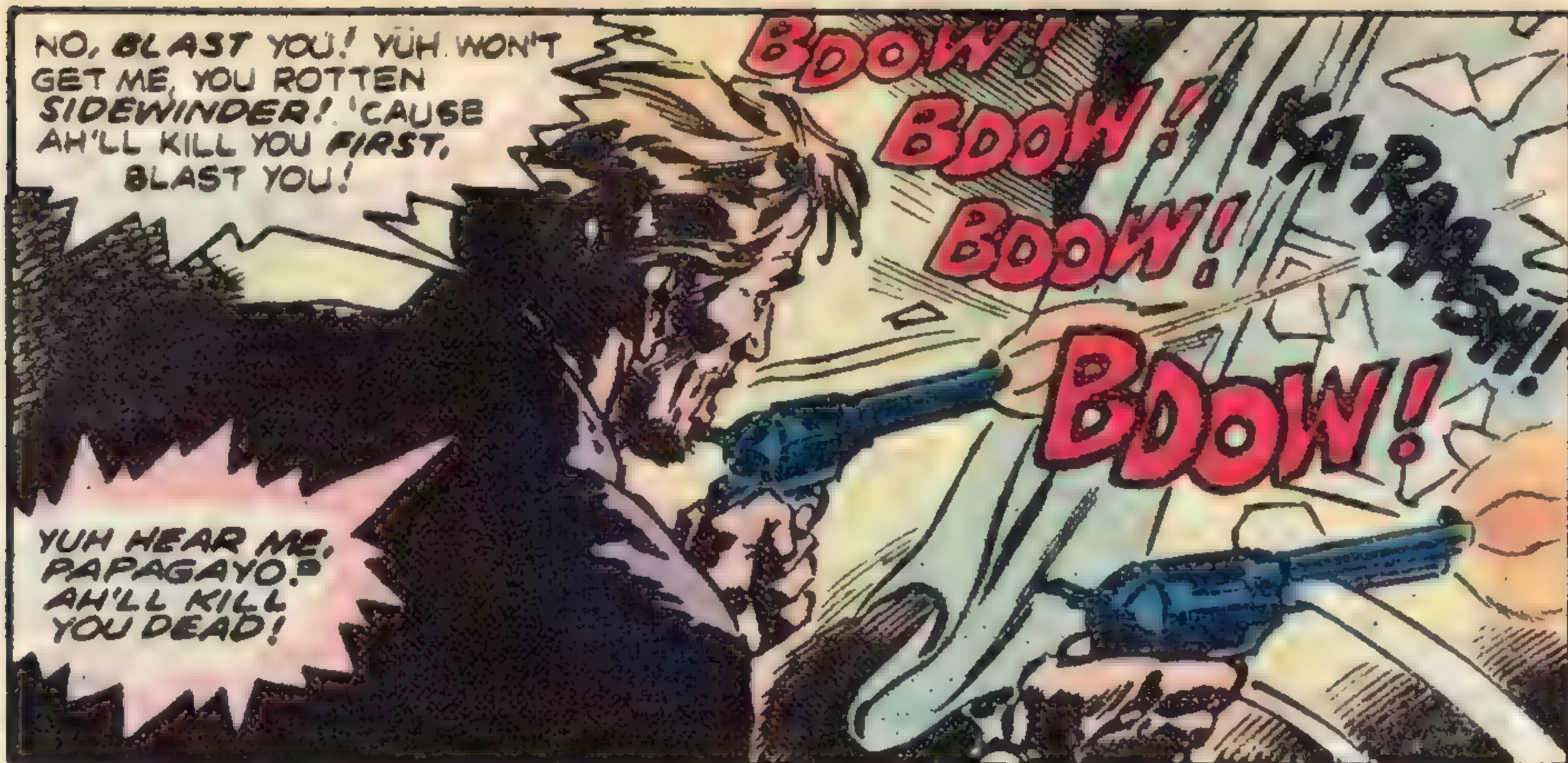
EL PAPAGAYO!
BUT IT... IT
CAIN'T BE!

OHO, BUT
EET IS, SEÑOR!
I AM HEARING
THAT YOU HAVE
LOST YOUR
WOMAN, SEÑOR,
AND, OF COURSE,
I AM COMING
HERE AT ONCE
TO COMMISERATE
WITH YOU, MY
OLD FRIEND!

YOU SHOULD HAVE ASK ME FOR ADVICE
BEFORE THEES, SEÑOR! BECAUSE EL
PAPAGAYO, HE EES ONE MUY FANTASTIC
HOMBRE WHEN IT COMES TO HANDLING
THE WOMENS!

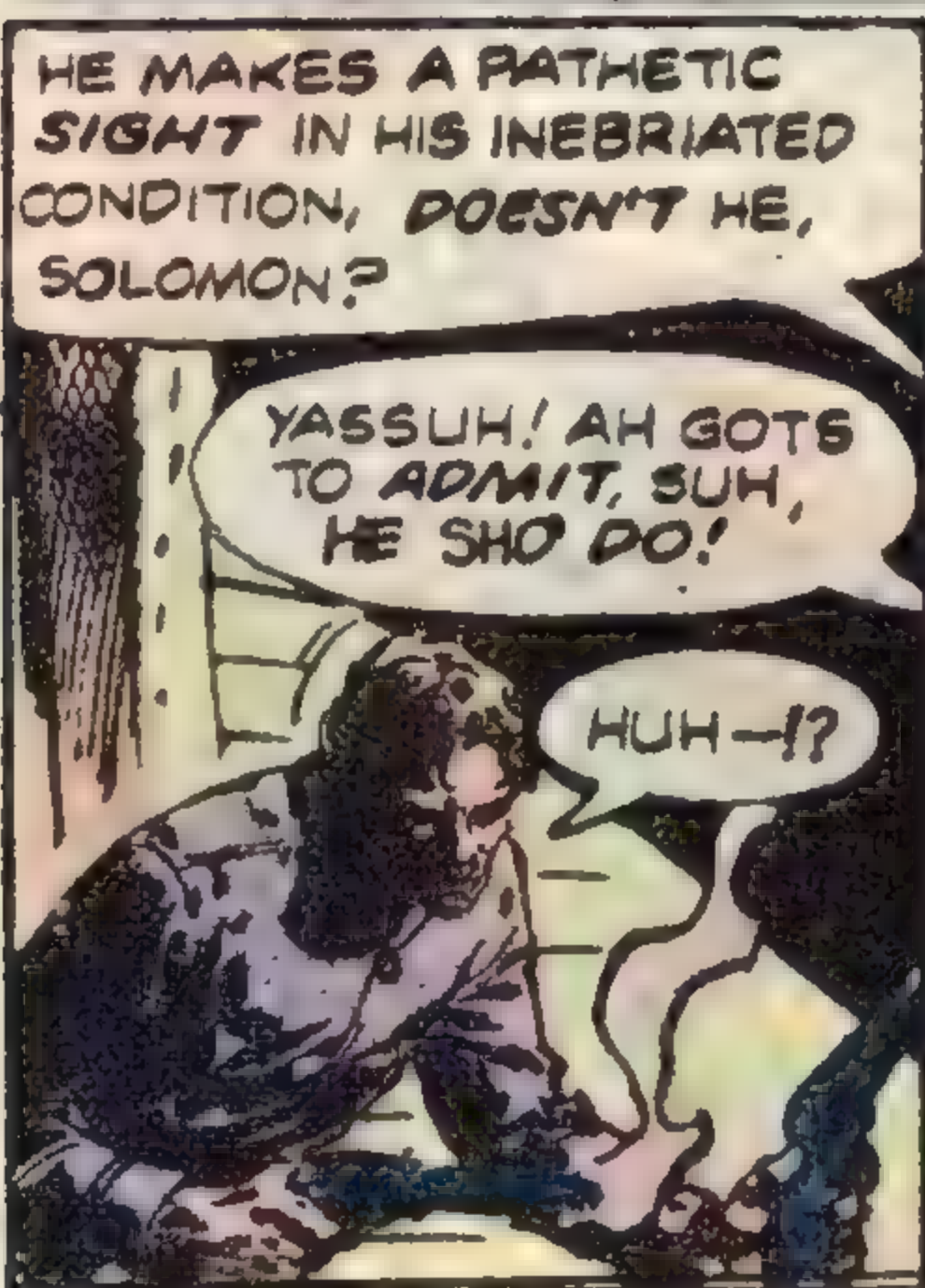
BUT NOW, I THINK I
WEEL JUST PUT YOU OUT
OF YOUR MISERIES, OKAY,
MY FRIEND?





NO, BLAST YOU! YUH WON'T
GET ME, YOU ROTTEN
SIDEWINDER! 'CAUSE
AH'LL KILL YOU FIRST,
BLAST YOU!

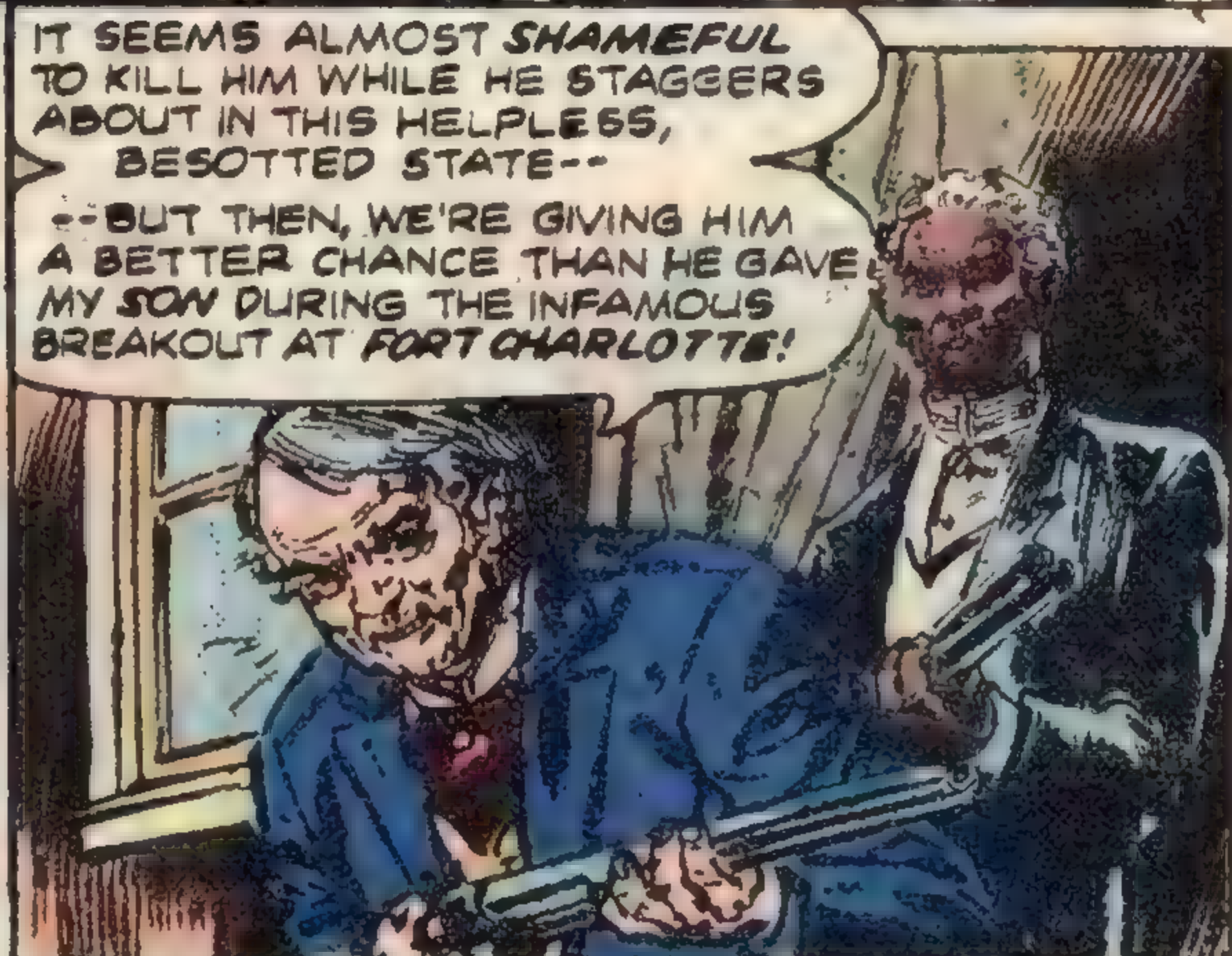
YUH HEAR ME,
PAPAGAYO?
AH'LL KILL
YOU DEAD!



HE MAKES A PATHETIC
SIGHT IN HIS INEBRIATED
CONDITION, DOESN'T HE,
SOLOMON?

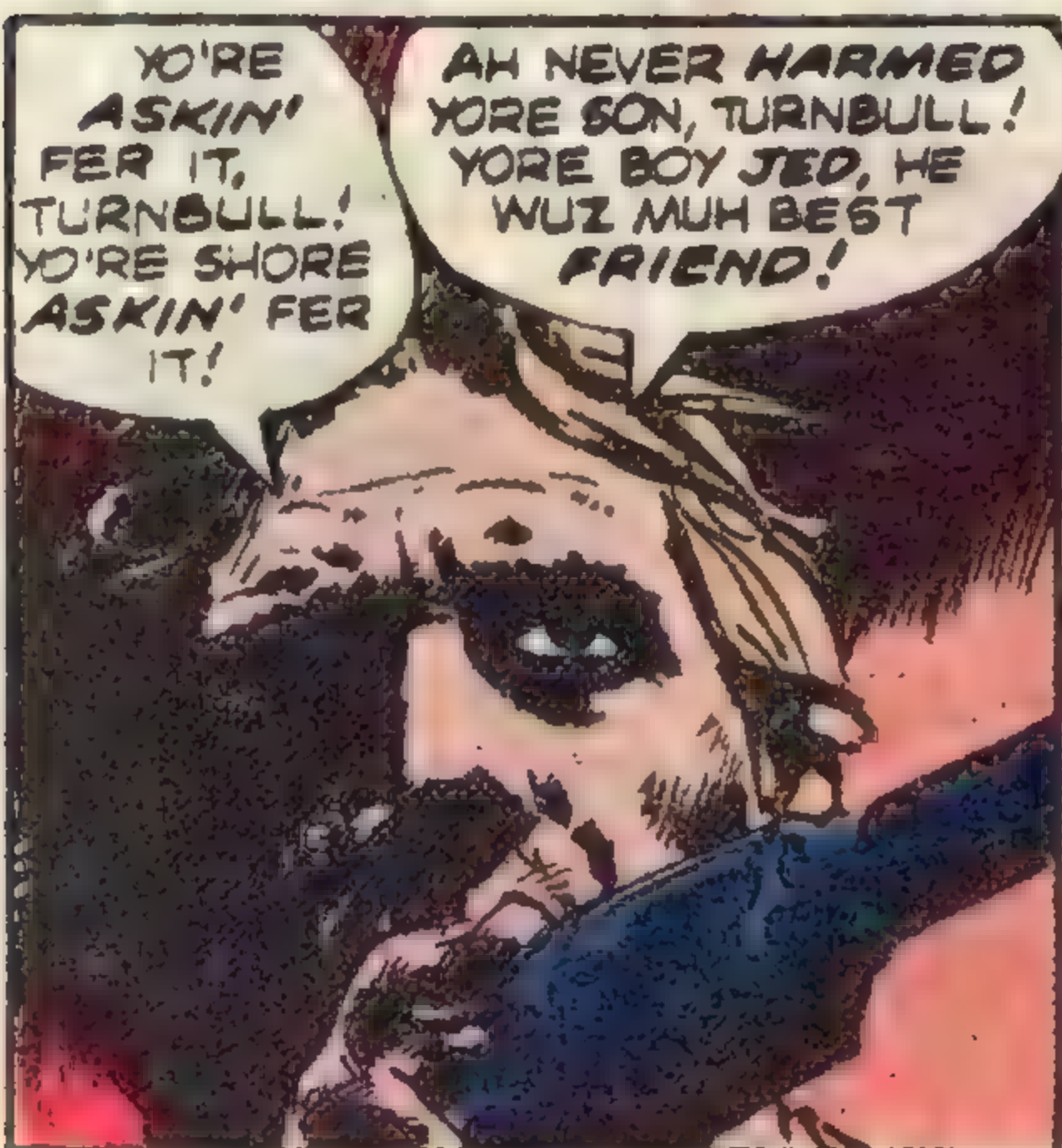
YASSUH! AH GOTTS
TO ADMIT, SUH,
HE SHO DO!

HUH--!?



IT SEEMS ALMOST SHAMEFUL
TO KILL HIM WHILE HE STAGGERS
ABOUT IN THIS HELPLESS,
BESOTTED STATE--

--BUT THEN, WE'RE GIVING HIM
A BETTER CHANCE THAN HE GAVE
MY SON DURING THE INFAMOUS
BREAKOUT AT FORT CHARLOTTE!



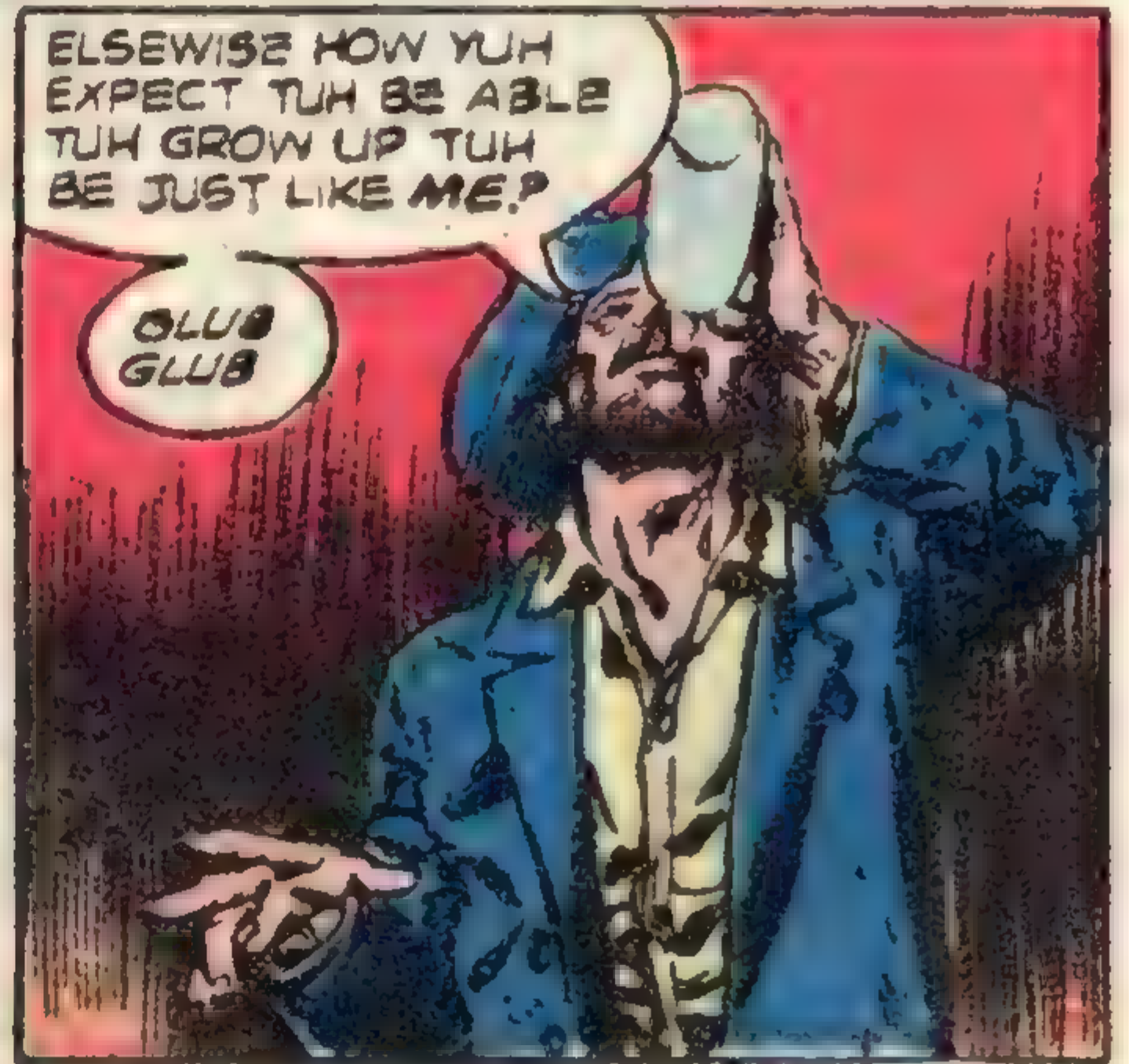
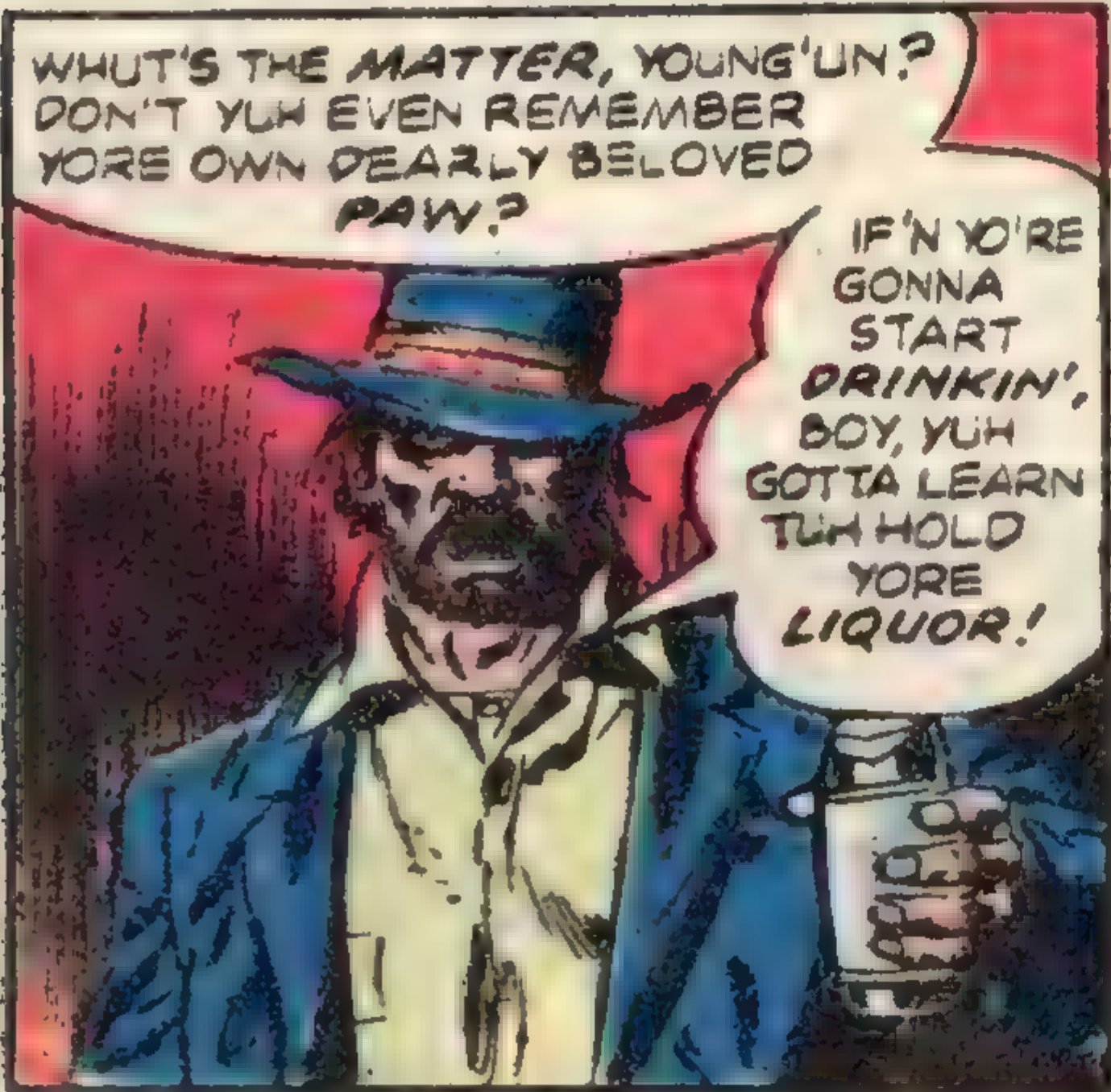
YO'RE
ASKIN'
FER IT,
TURNBULL!
YO'RE SHORE
ASKIN' FER
IT!

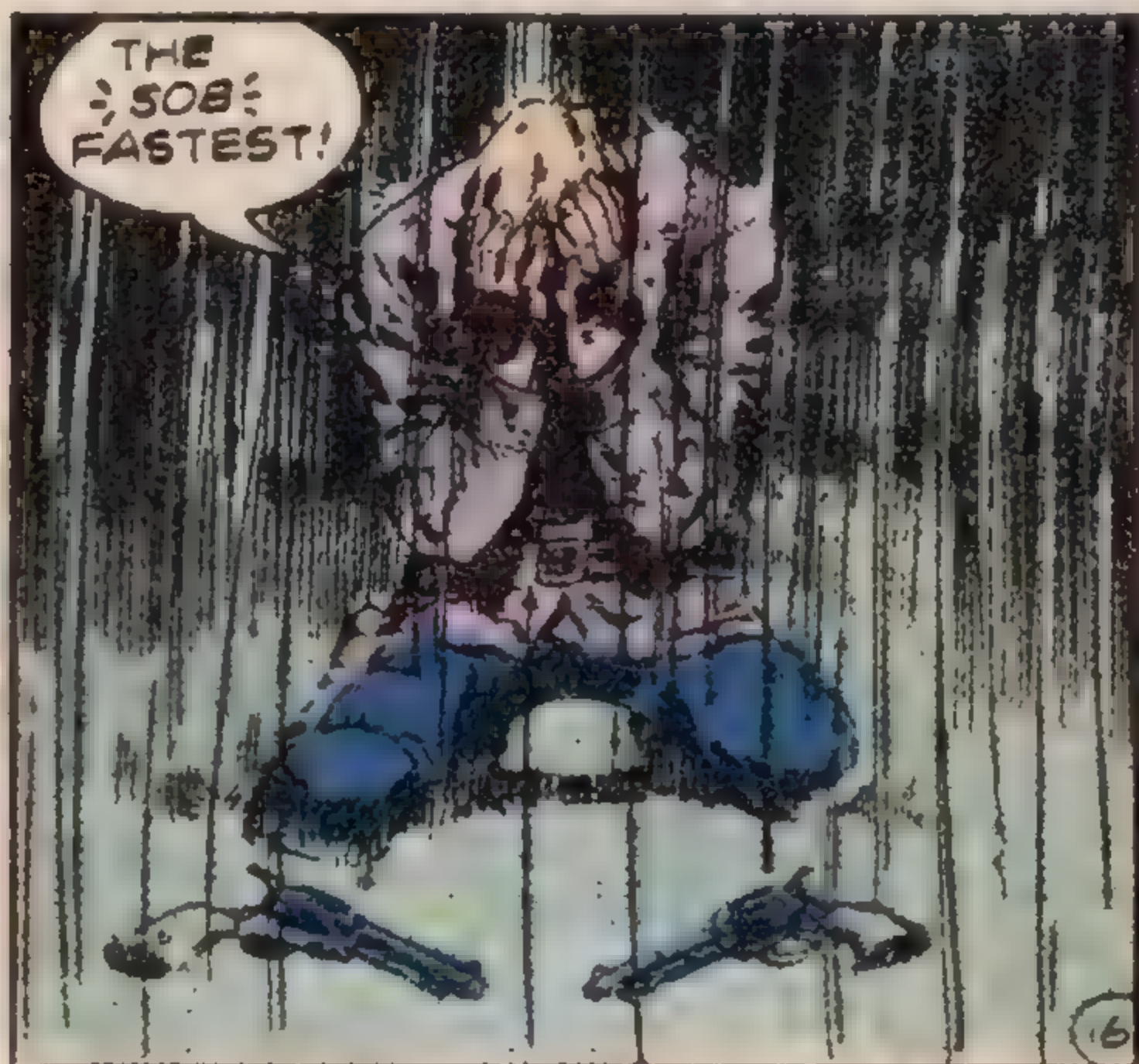
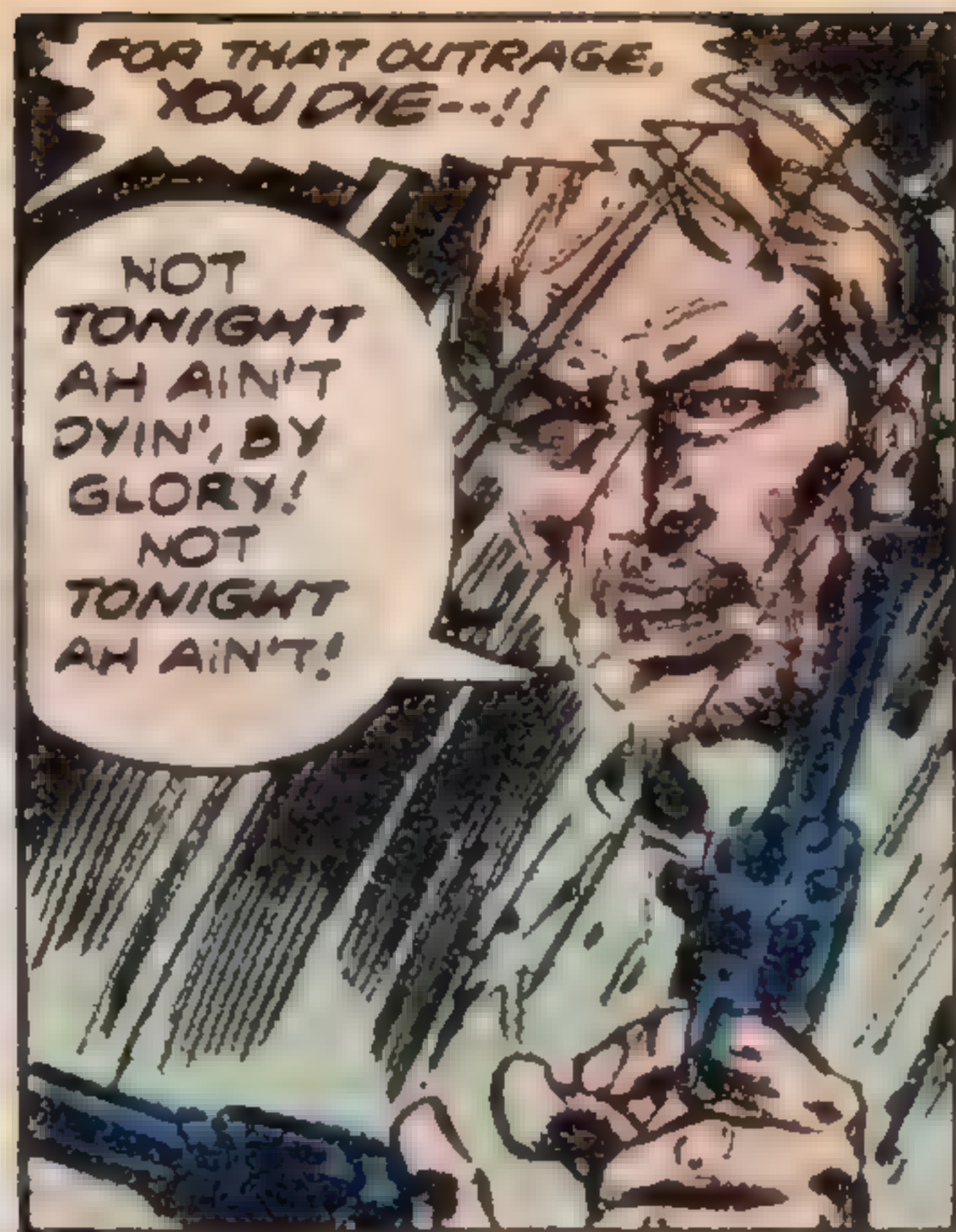
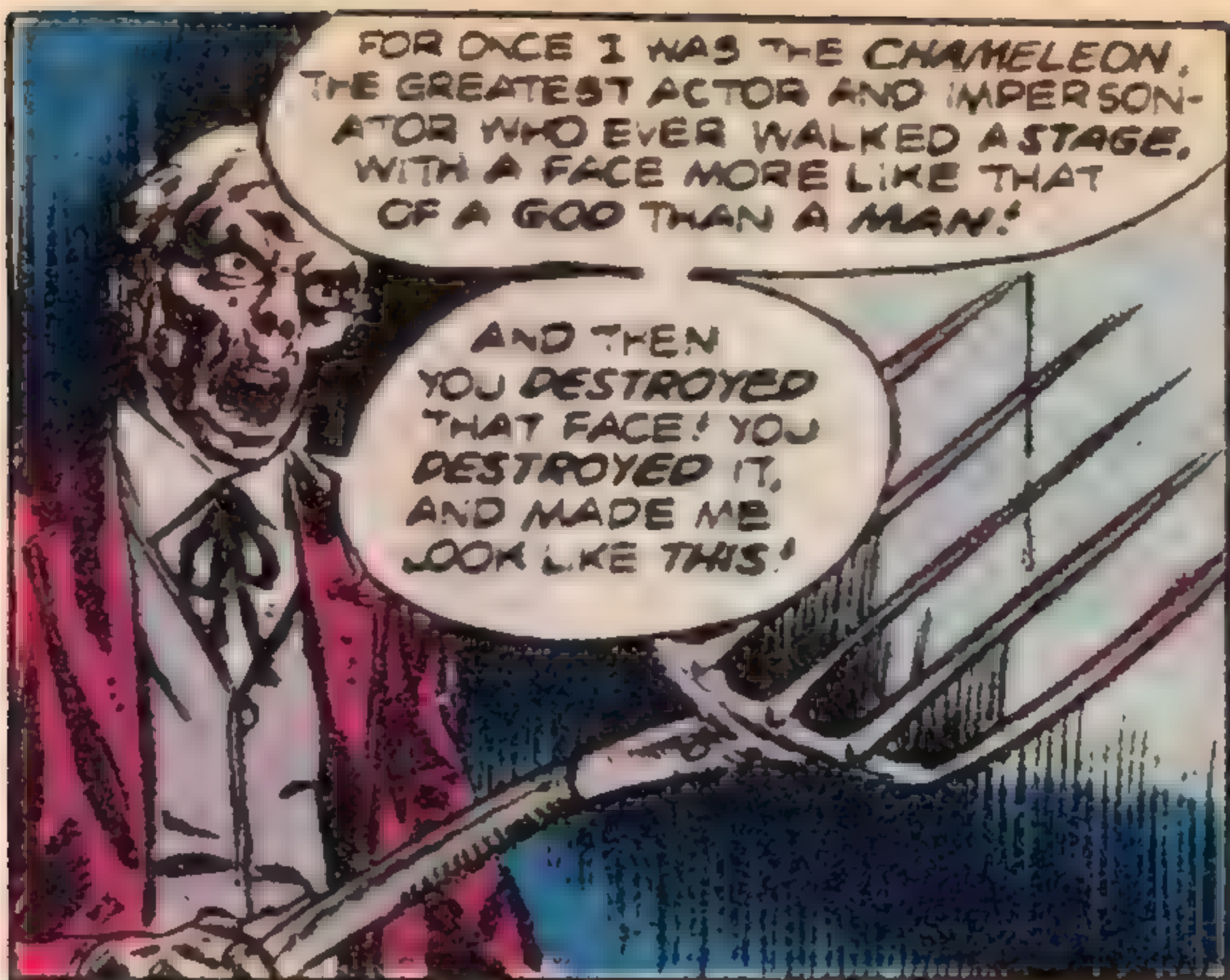
AH NEVER HARMED
YORE SON, TURNBULL!
YORE BOY JED, HE
WUZ MUH BEST
FRIEND!

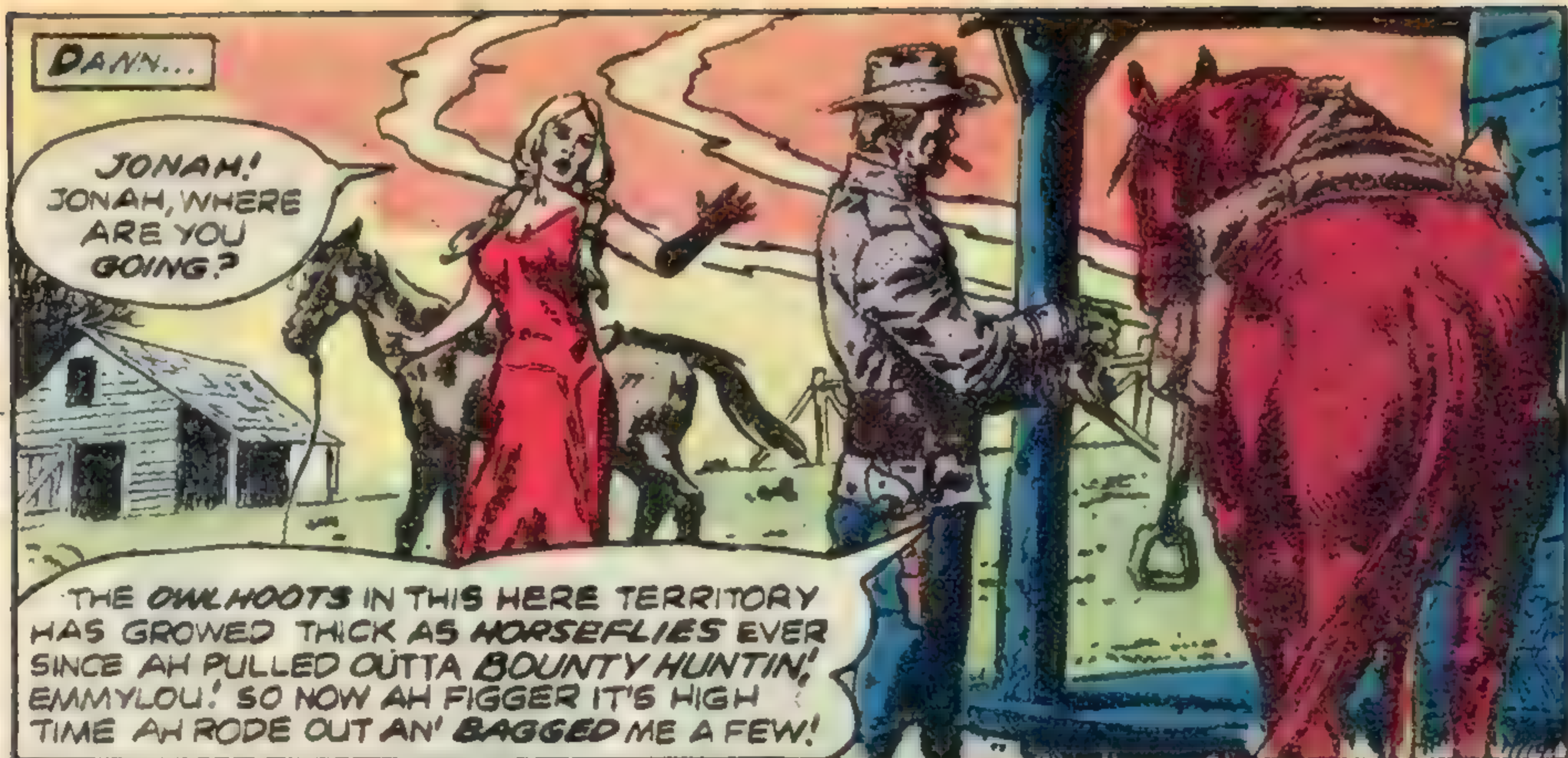


BUT THET DON'T MEAN AH'M
GONNA JUST STAND HERE
AN' LET Y'ALL GUN ME
DOWN, TURNBULL!

OH NO,
SAH AIN'T!



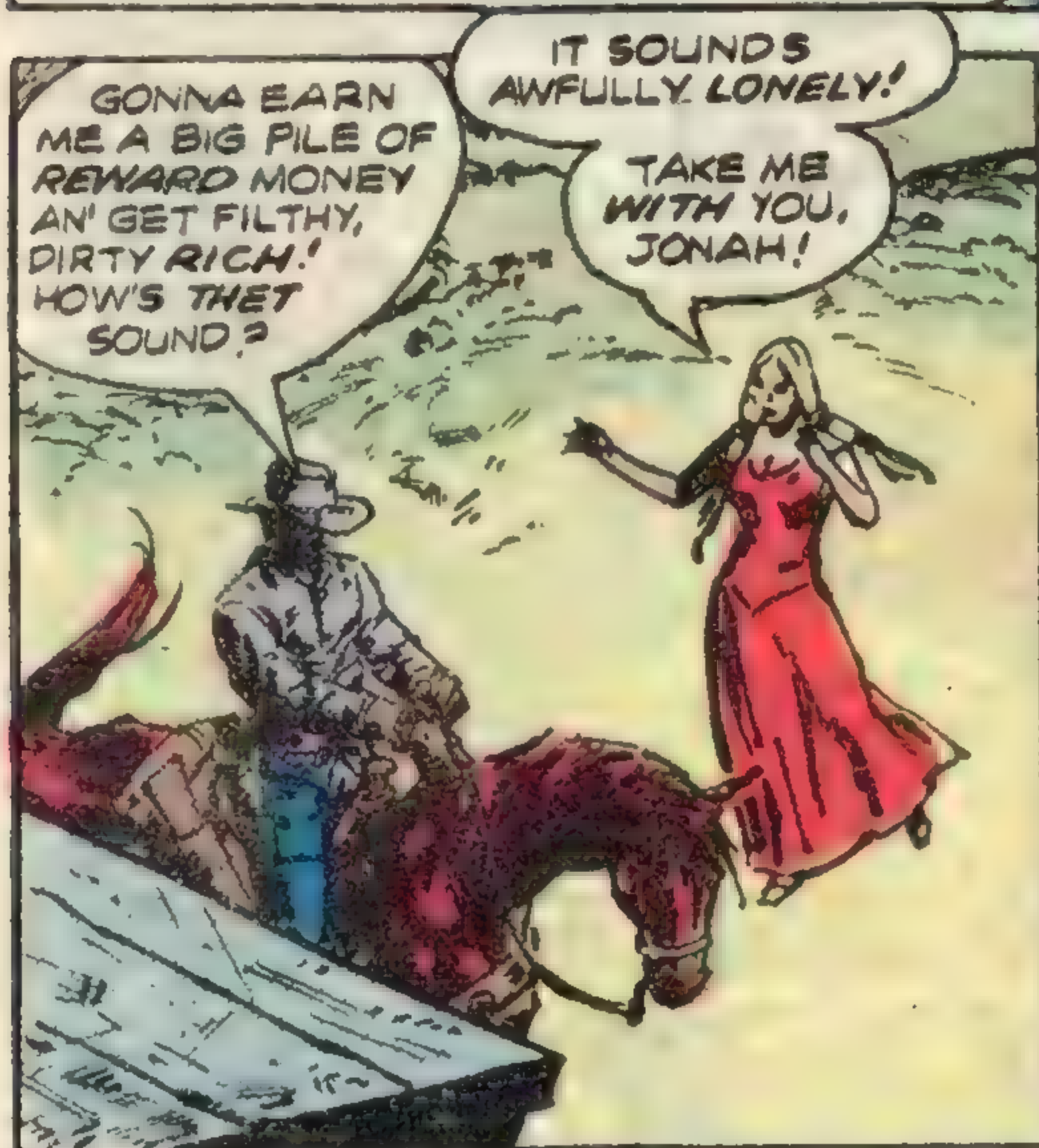




DANN...

JONAH!
JONAH, WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?

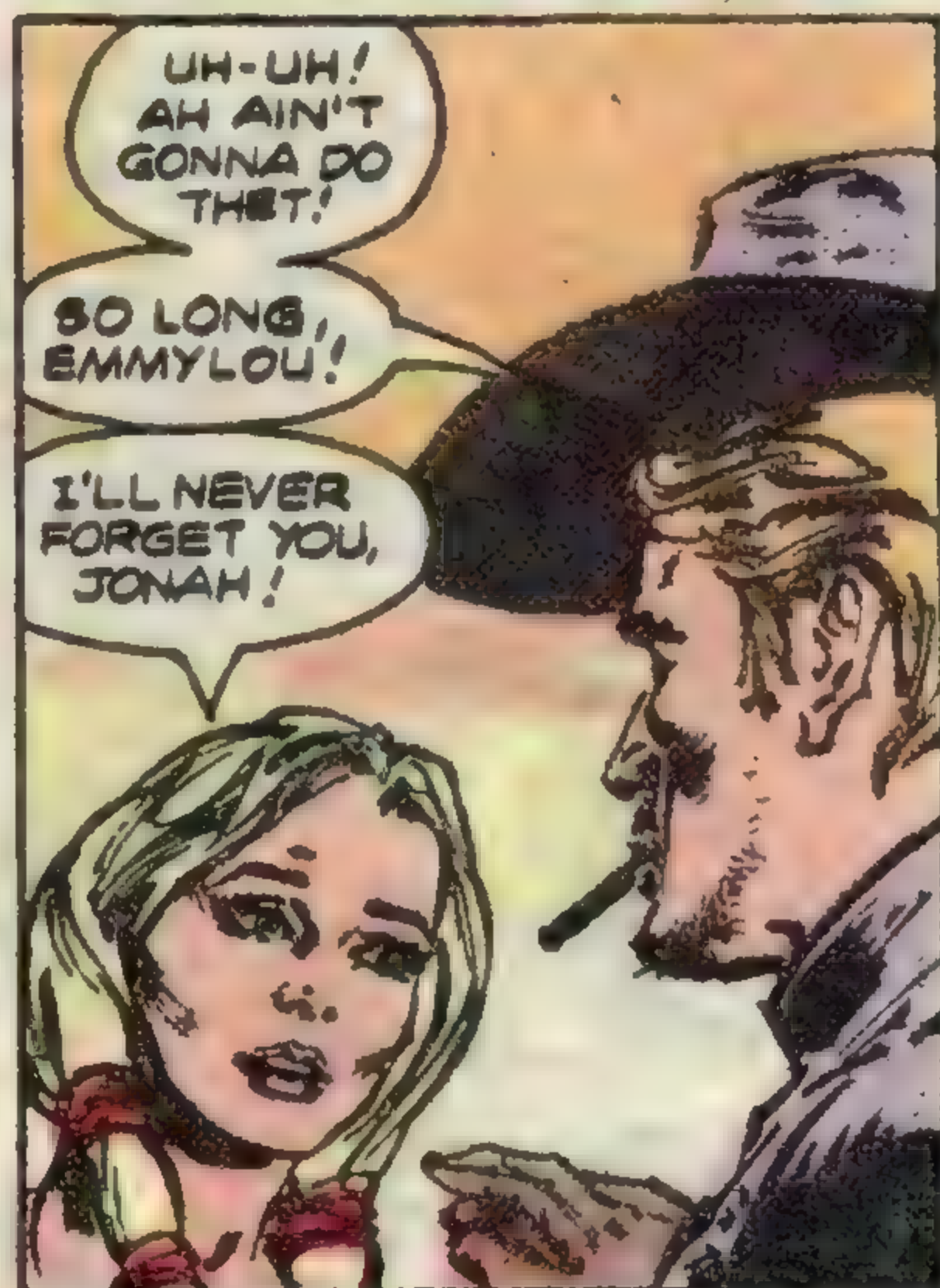
THE OWLHOOTS IN THIS HERE TERRITORY
HAS GROWN THICK AS HORSEFLIES EVER
SINCE AH PULLED OUTTA BOUNTY HUNTIN'
EMMYLOU! SO NOW AH FIGGER IT'S HIGH
TIME AH RODE OUT AN' BAGGED ME A FEW!



GONNA EARN
ME A BIG PILE OF
REWARD MONEY
AN' GET FILTHY,
DIRTY RICH!
HOW'S THET
SOUND?

IT SOUNDS
AWFULLY LONELY!

TAKE ME
WITH YOU,
JONAH!



UH-UH!
AH AIN'T
GONNA DO
THET!

SO LONG,
EMMYLOU!

I'LL NEVER
FORGET YOU,
JONAH!



OH YEAH!
YOU WILL!

FOR YEARS BEYOND NUMBERING, THEY HAVE DEFENDED THE UNIVERSE AGAINST UNDYING EVIL! NOW, AT LAST, THE TALES OF THEIR HEROISM CAN BE TOLD...

TALES OF THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS

THOUGH IT IS BARELY MID-AFTERNOON, THE SKY OVER THE LOS ANGELES BRANCH OF FERRIS AIRCRAFT IS A MELANCHOLY GRAY, RIPE WITH THE PROMISE OF STORM...



THUS, ALL ACROSS THE USUALLY BUSY TARMAC, NOTHING MOVES--

--SAVE FOR TWO SHADOWY FIGURES NOW ENTERING THE HANGAR--OFFICE OF TEST PILOT HAL JORDAN...



OKAY, WE'RE HERE!



NOW LET'S SEE WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT--



--OH.

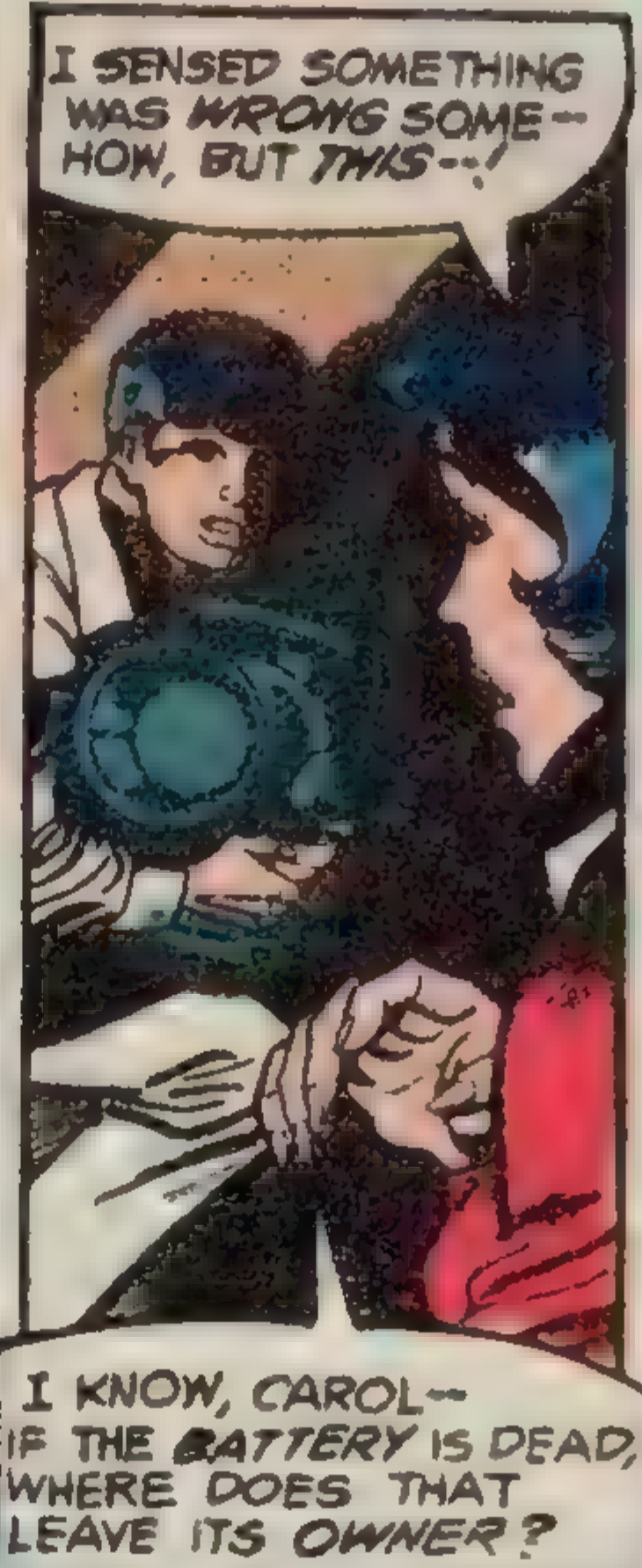
OH, TOM-- IT'S TRUE! BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

I DON'T KNOW, MS. FERRIS. I JUST FOUND IT LIKE THIS WHEN I CAME LOOKING FOR HAL EARLIER--



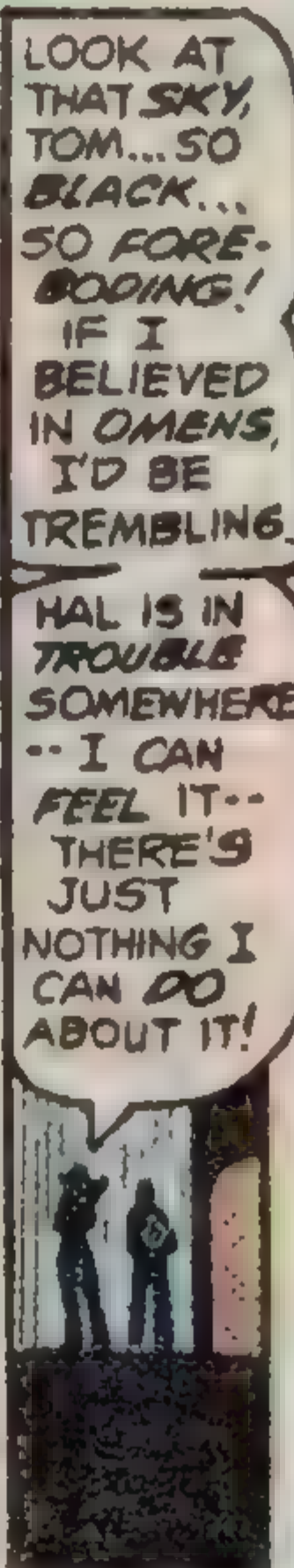
--GREEN LANTERN'S POWER BATTERY, LYING THERE ON THE FLOOR...

...DEAD...



I SENSED SOMETHING WAS WRONG SOME--HOW, BUT THIS--!

I KNOW, CAROL-- IF THE BATTERY IS DEAD, WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE ITS OWNER?



LOOK AT THAT SKY, TOM... SO BLACK... SO FORE-BODDING! IF I BELIEVED IN OMENS, I'D BE TREMBLING.

HAL IS IN TROUBLE SOMEWHERE -- I CAN FEEL IT-- THERE'S JUST NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT!



NO, CAROL, THERE'S STILL SOMETHING WE CAN DO...

WE CAN PRAY FOR HIM!

AND AS CAROL FERRIS AND THOMAS KALMAKU VAINLY ATTEMPT TO COMFORT ONE ANOTHER, IN A PRIVATE HOSPITAL MANY MILES AWAY--

--FORMER SCHOOL TEACHER GUY GARDNER SITS IN A CATATONIC STUPOR, STARRING OUT IN SILENCE AT THE IMPENDING STORM...

WHILE, HALFWAY ACROSS THE CONTINENT, ANOTHER WHO HAS WORN THE JADE-AND-JET UNIFORM OF EARTH'S POWER-RINGED PROTECTOR ALSO SENSES THE ALMOST TANGIBLE DANGER IN THE AIR--

--BUT ARCHITECT JOHN STEWART ASSUMES THE GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE WILL CALL HIM IF THEY NEED HIM--

--AND, EVEN NOW, SOMETHING DEEP WITHIN HIM STILL SENSES THE CLARION CALL TO BATTLE--

--BUT, ALAS, HE CANNOT ANSWER!

HAD A CAPRICIOUS FATE BEEN MORE KIND, IT IS HE WHO WOULD HAVE WIELDED THE GREEN LANTERN--

BUT, REGRETTABLY, JOHN STEWART IS WRONG--

--FOR, EVEN NOW, FAR BEYOND EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, ONE OF THE IMMORTAL GUARDIANS STRUGGLES WITH ALL THE AWESOME POWER AT HIS COMMAND TO PROTECT THE PLANET EARTH FROM THE UNIMAGINABLE FORCES WHICH THREATEN TO DESTROY IT--

--AND THUS, HE MERELY SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS, AND RETURNS TO THE WORK AT HAND.

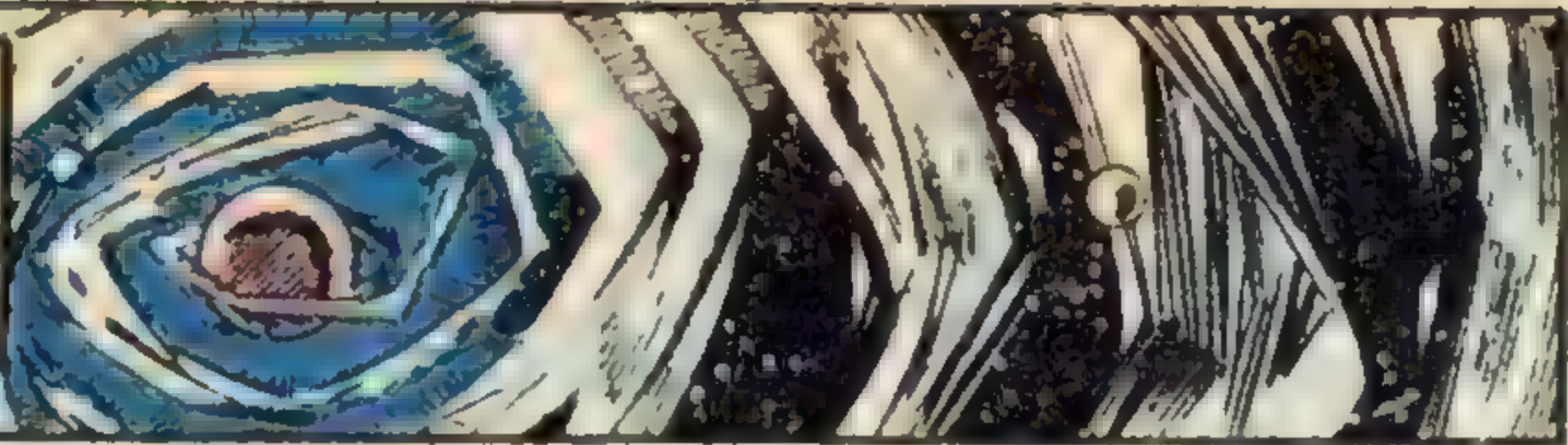
AND THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE AGES WELL!

TRIUMPH!

LEN WEIN - SCRIPTER • FROM A PLOT BY MIKE W. BARR
JOE STATON & FRANK McLAUGHLIN - ILLUSTRATORS
GEN OGA - LETTERER • ANTHONY TOLLIN - COLORIST
DICK GIORDANO - EDITOR

Featuring concepts created by MARY WOLFGANG & JACK C. HARRIS

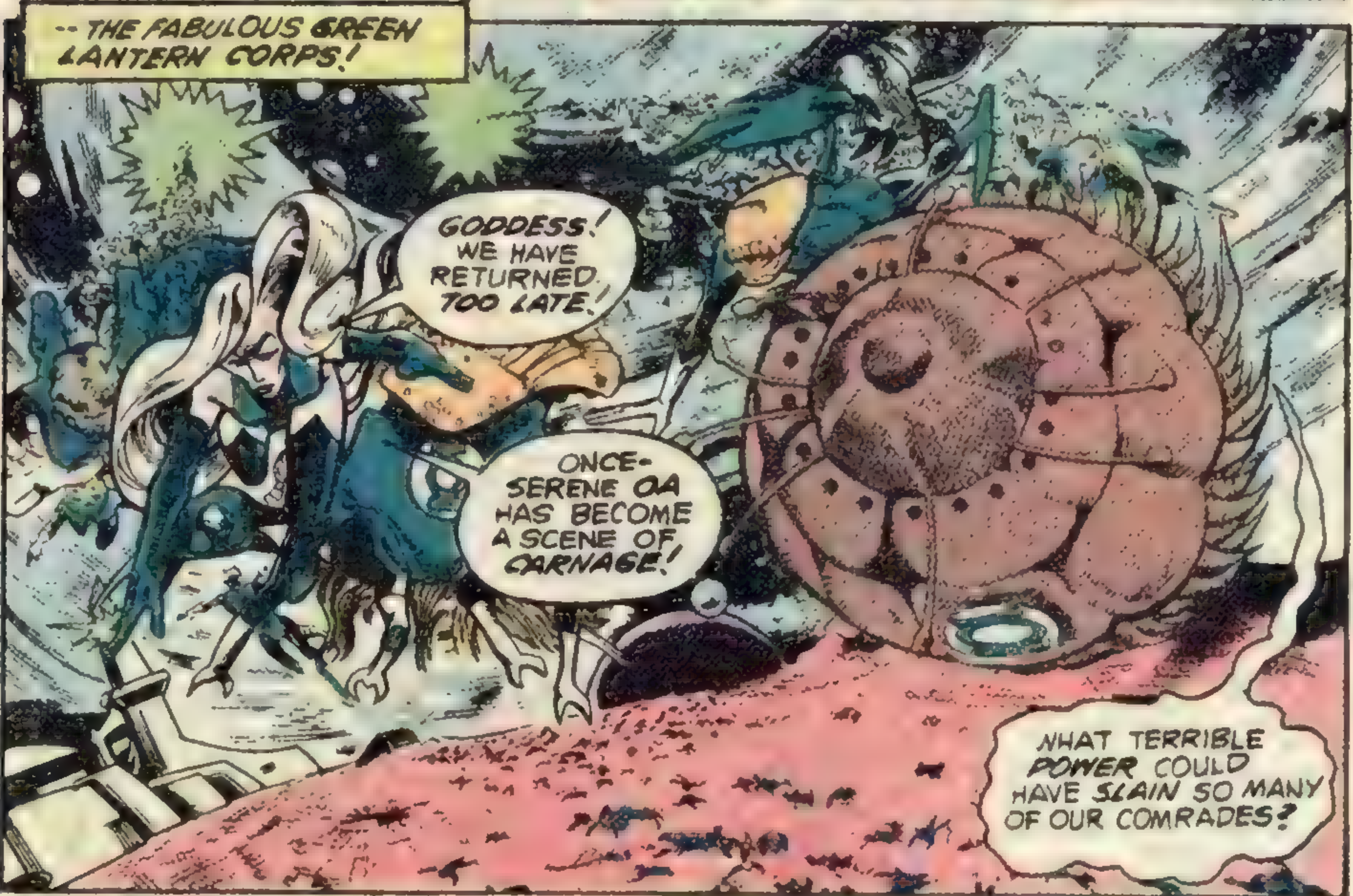
AT THE VERY CENTER OF THE RAPIDLY-CONTRACTING CELESTIAL VORTEX THAT IS NOW THE UNIVERSE STANDS THE LEGENDARY PLANET CALLED OA...



FOR UNTOLD MILLENNIA, IT HAS BEEN THE SACRED REFUGE OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE AND THEIR DEDICATED AGENTS--



-- THE FABULOUS GREEN LANTERN CORPS!



GODDESS!
WE HAVE
RETURNED
TOO LATE!

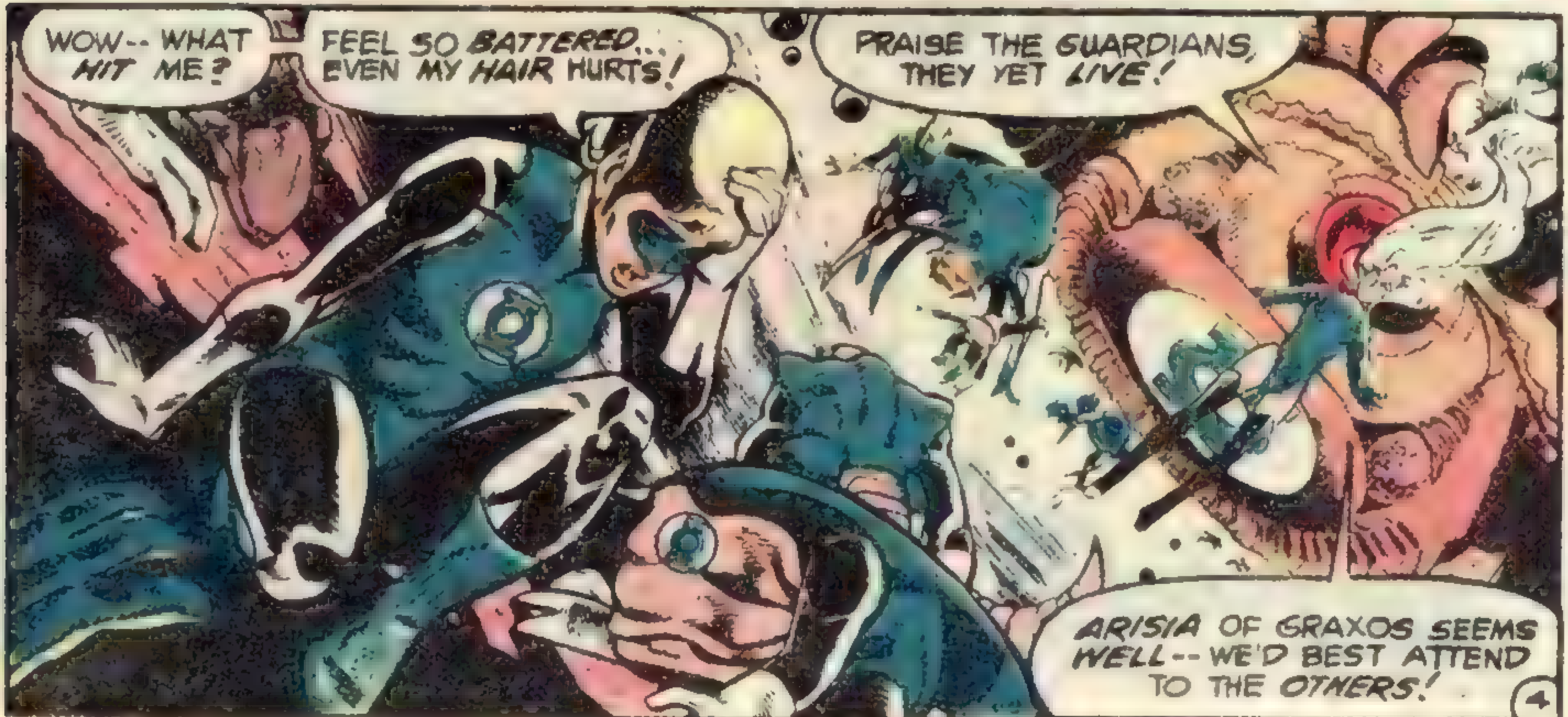
ONCE-
SERENE OA
HAS BECOME
A SCENE OF
CARNAGE!

WHAT TERRIBLE
POWER COULD
HAVE SLAIN SO MANY
OF OUR COMRADES?

WOW-- WHAT
HIT ME?

FEEL SO BATTERED...
EVEN MY HAIR HURTS!

PRAISE THE GUARDIANS,
THEY YET LIVE!



ARISIA OF GRAXOS SEEMS
WELL-- WE'D BEST ATTEND
TO THE OTHERS!

AND, AS TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION IS ONCE MORE ESTABLISHED...

FORGIVE US FOR NOT ARRIVING HERE SOONER, TOMAR-RE!

YOUR BATTLE WITH KRONA MIGHT HAVE GONE DIFFERENTLY!

I'M JUST THANKFUL THERE WERE NO MORE CASUALTIES, K'RYSSMA!

EXCEPT PERHAPS FOR ONE...

HAL JORDAN OF EARTH WAS THE LAST TO FALL BEFORE KRONA'S POWER-- AND HE STILL HAS NOT STIRRED!

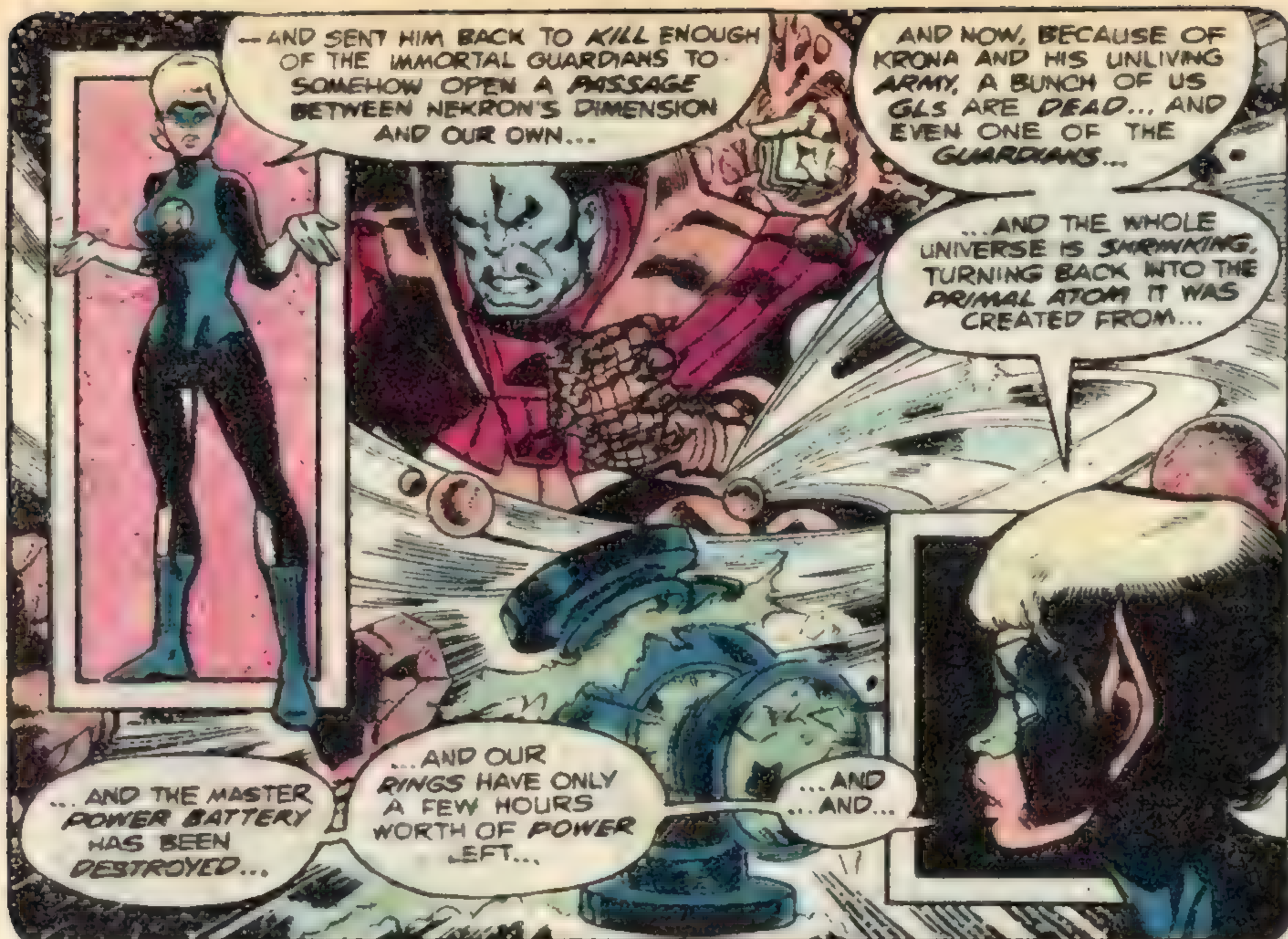
NO..NOT HAL! OF ALL OF US-- NOT HIM!

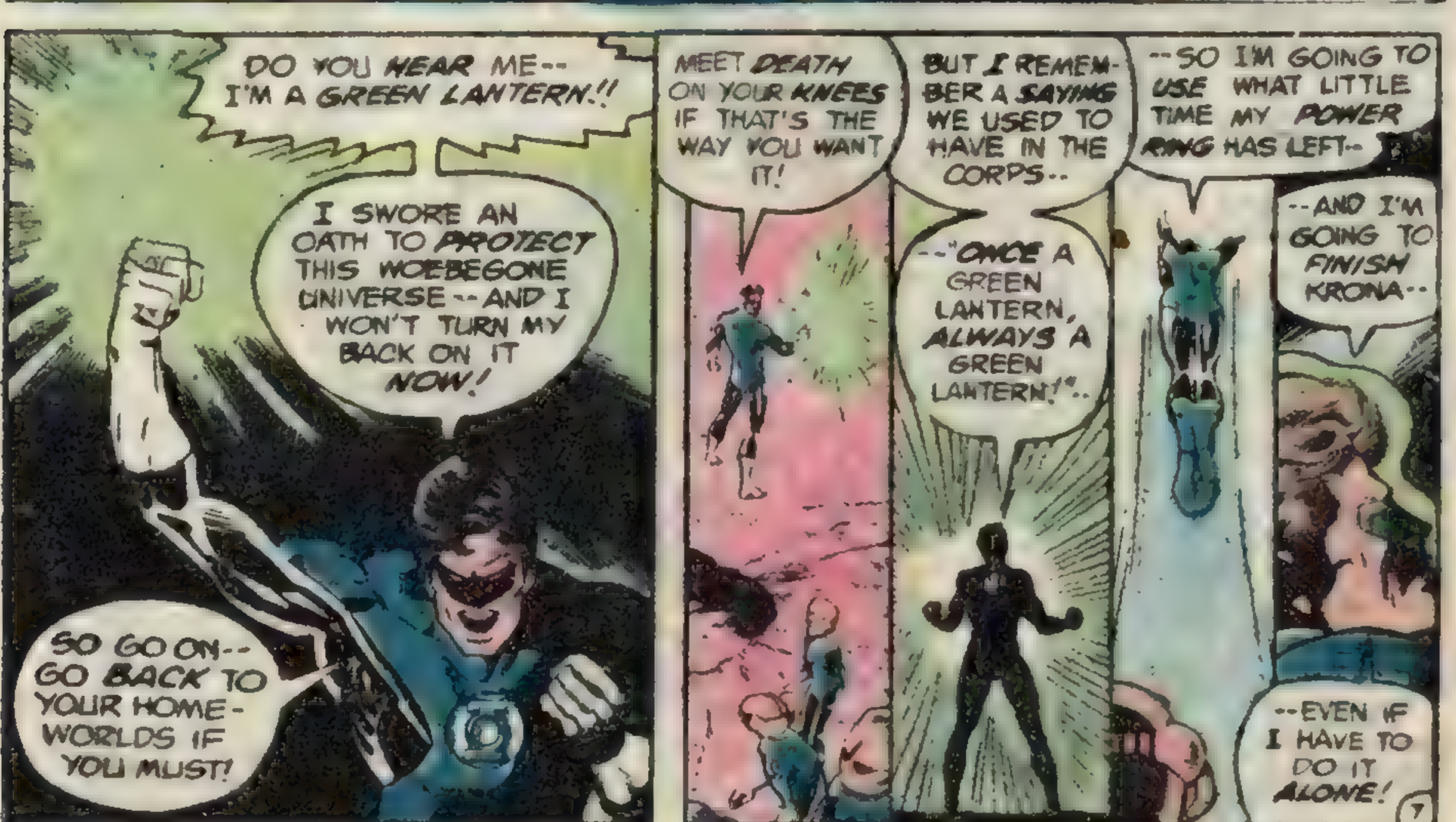
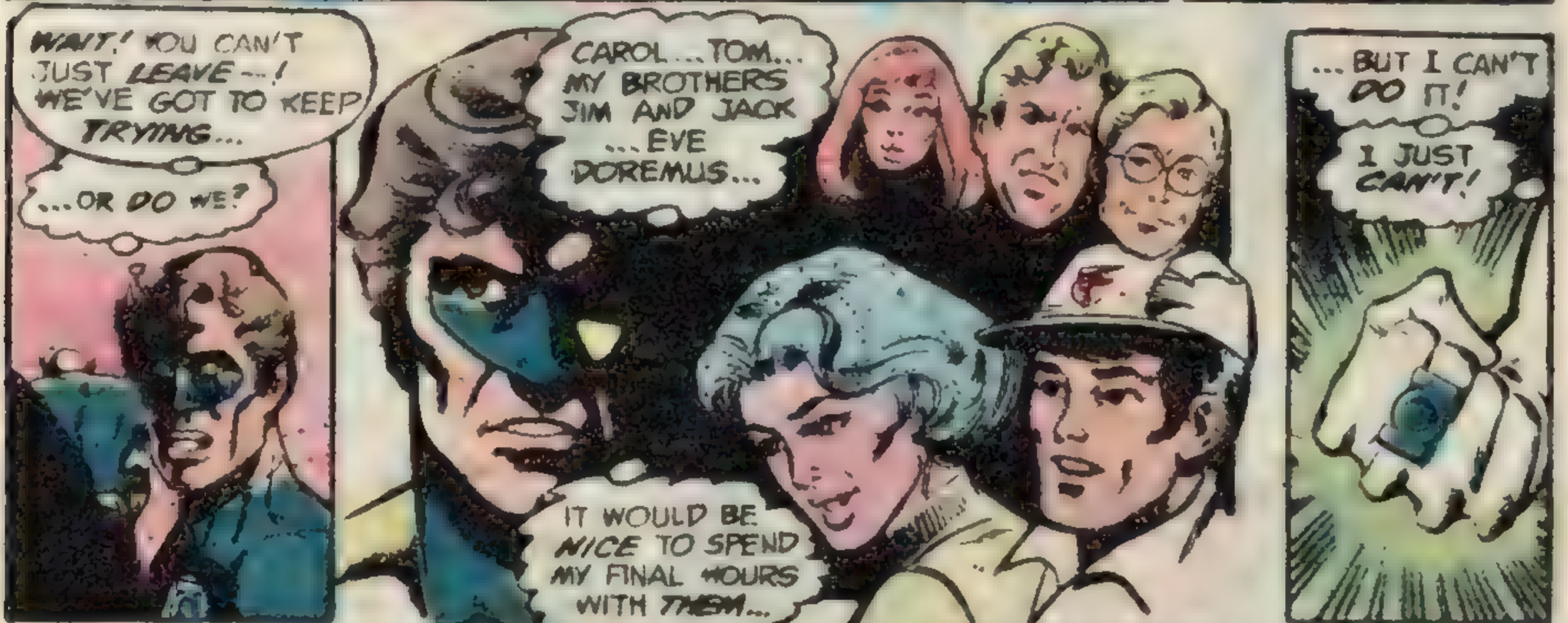
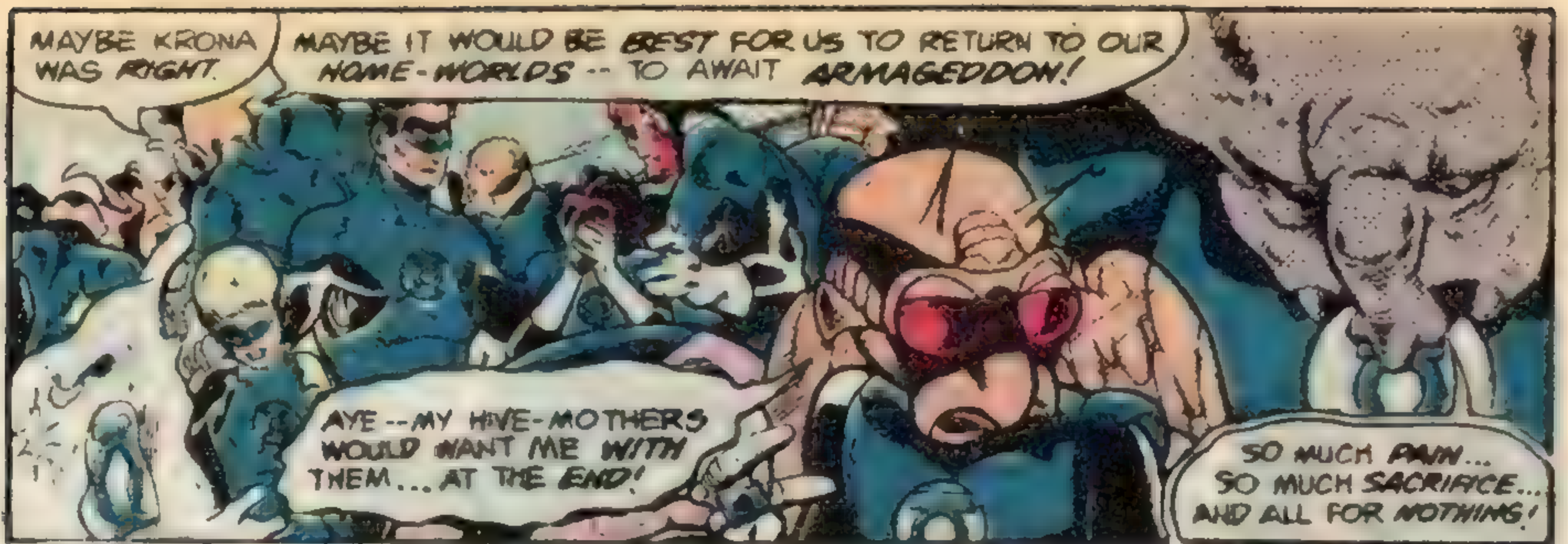
I MEAN, IT WAS HAL WHO FIRST DEFEATED THE RENEGADE OAN CALLED KRONA--

"-- SO THE GUARDIANS COULD TRANSFORM KRONA INTO ENERGY AND SEND HIM ON AN ENDLESS TRIP ACROSS THE COSMOS!"

"IS IT HAL'S FAULT THAT KRONA FINALLY BURST RIGHT OUT OF THIS DIMENSION--INTO THE REALM OF NEKRON, LORD OF THE UNLIVING?"

"IT'S NEKRON WHO RECONSTRUCTED KRONA--"





BUT AS THE GRIMLY
DETERMINED GREEN
GLADIATOR STREAKS
INTO THE CHURNING
VCD...

HAL -- WAIT!

WHO...?!

TOMAR-RE... KATMA TUI...
ARISIA... YOU CAME!

OF COURSE WE
CAME! YOU'RE
NOT ALONE, HAL!

YOU'LL NEVER
BE ALONE!

"WE'RE ALL WITH
YOU IN THIS, MY
FRIEND--

"--RIGHT TO
THE BITTER
END!"

AYE, SOMETHING THOU DIDST
SAY STRUCK A CHORD DEEP
WITHIN US ALL, FELLOW
WARRIOR!

ONE TRAGIC BATTLE
DOES NOT DETERMINE
A WAR!

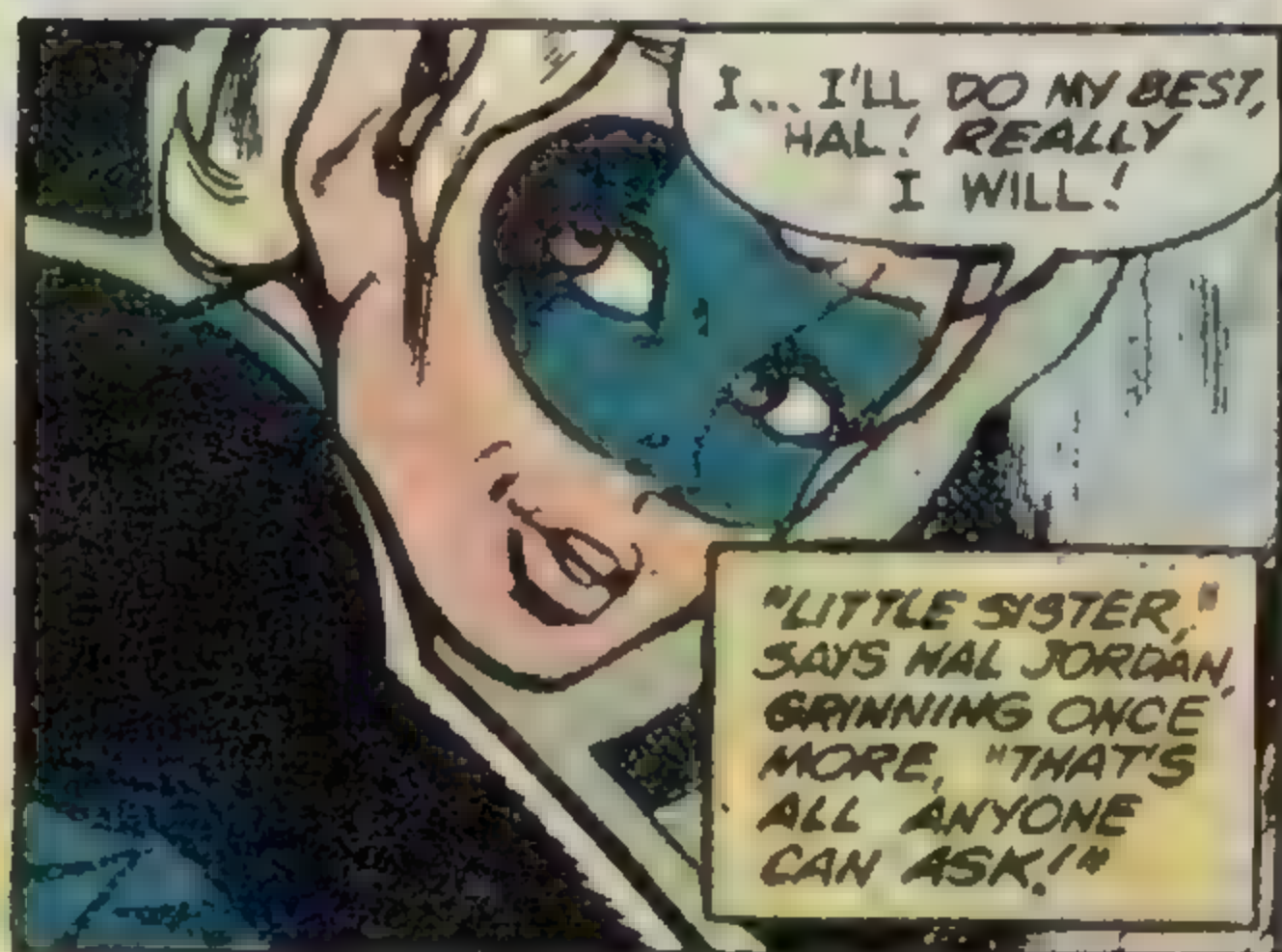
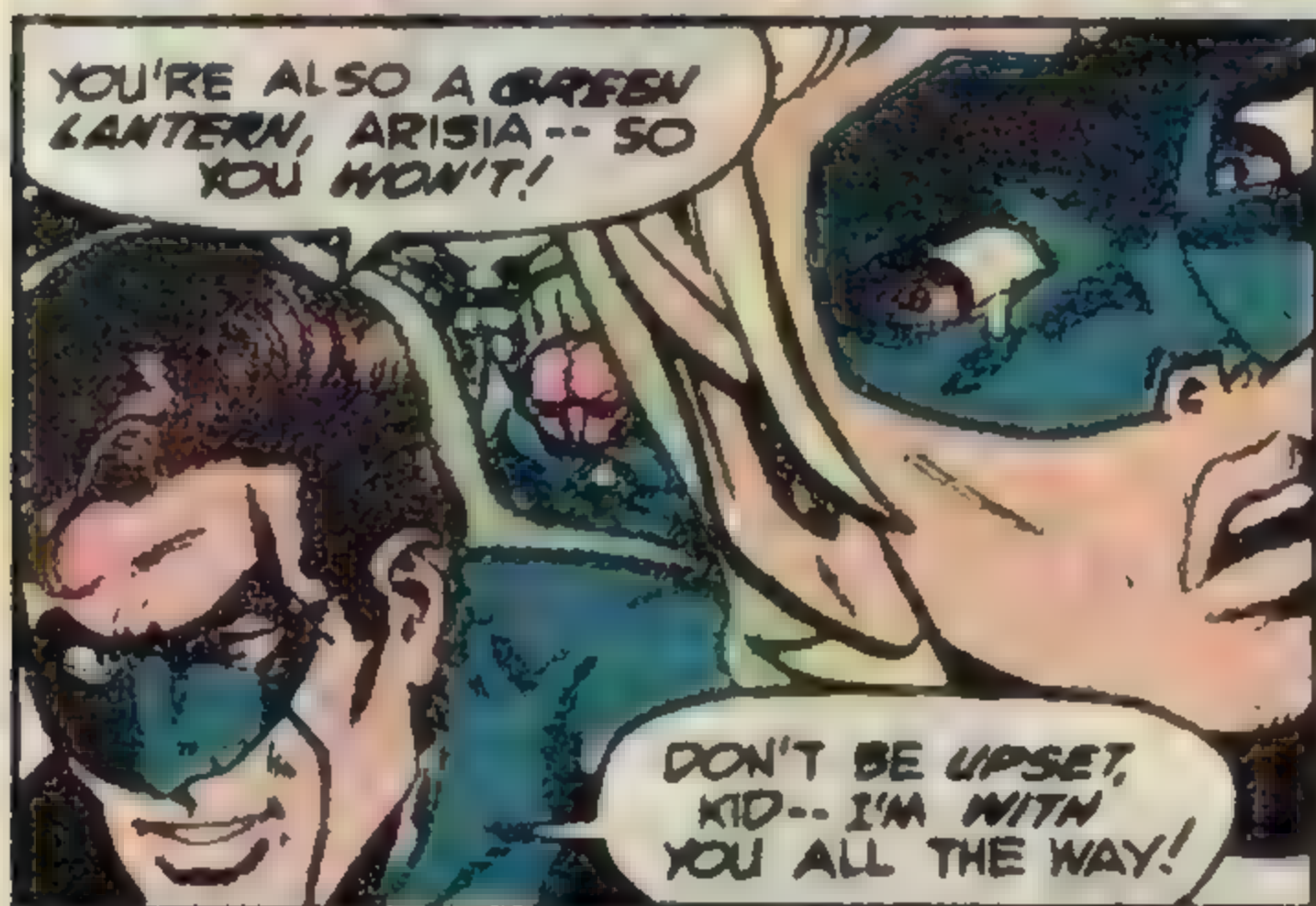
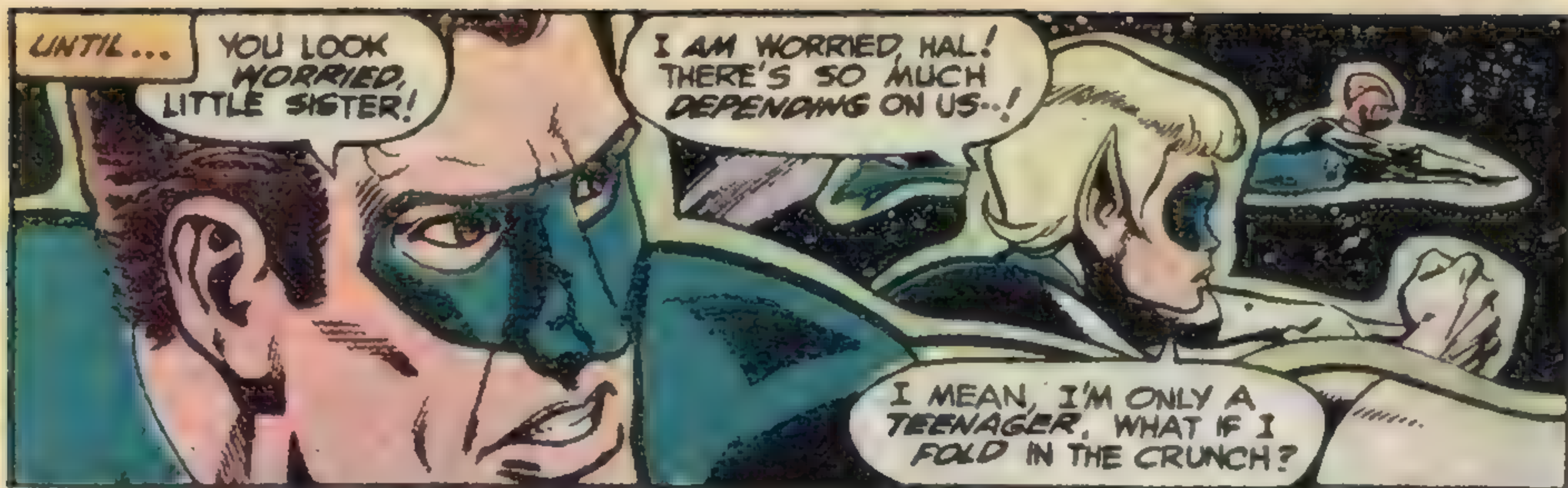
IF PERISH
WE MUST--
SO BE
IT!

YEAH-- BUT
WE'RE NOT
GONNA DIE
AFRAID!

NO MATTER THE
DANGER, NO MATTER
THE ODDS, THE GREEN
LANTERN CORPS HAS
NEVER SURRENDERED--

--AND WE DON'T
INTEND TO START
NOW!!

AND HAL JORDAN SMILES...



WHILE, LIGHT-YEARS DISTANT, AT THE DESOLATE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE...



PRESS HARDER, MY BROTHERS! THAT PATHWAY BETWEEN DIMENSIONS MUST BE CLOSED!

YET, BEYOND THE PORTAL, IN THE LIMBO-LIKE REALM OF THE UNLIVING ENTITY CALLED NEYRON...

THEY ARE VALIANT WARRIORS INDEED, THE GUARDIANS -- THEY DO NOT SURRENDER LIFE EASILY!



BUT I GROW IMPATIENT TO SAVOR THE FRUITS OF LIFE -- AND ONLY THE DEATHS OF THESE GUARDIANS WILL ALLOW THAT!

THUS I SUMMON TO ME MY CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS, THAT HE MIGHT PUT AN END TO THIS DEBACLE -- BEFORE I PUT AN END TO HIM!

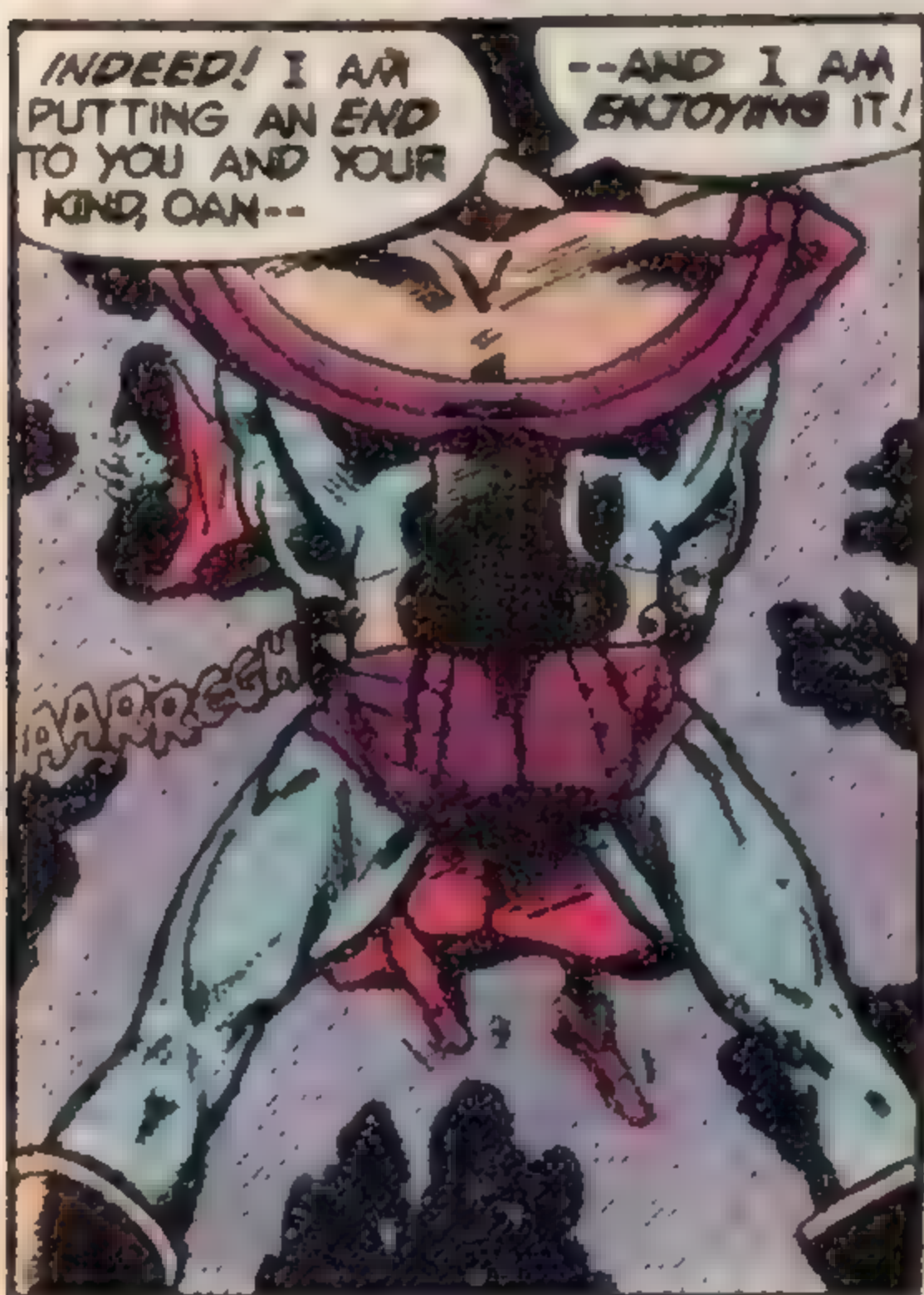
AND TO THE LORD OF THE UNLIVING, THE THOUGHT IS THE DEED!

THERE IS A FLASH OF DARK LIGHTNING IN THE ROLLING VOID...



--AND THEN THERE IS...

KRONA!!



AND, BEYOND THE VEIL, THE LORD OF THE UNLIVING ATTEMPTS TO SMILE...

SOON NOW... IT WILL BE SOON!

SOON THAT WHICH HAS FOREVER BEEN DENIED ME WILL AT LAST BE MINE!

AFTER COUNTLESS MILLENNIA OF DWELLING BETWEEN PLACES...

DO YOU HEAR ME, GUARDIANS... IT WILL ALL BE MINE!!

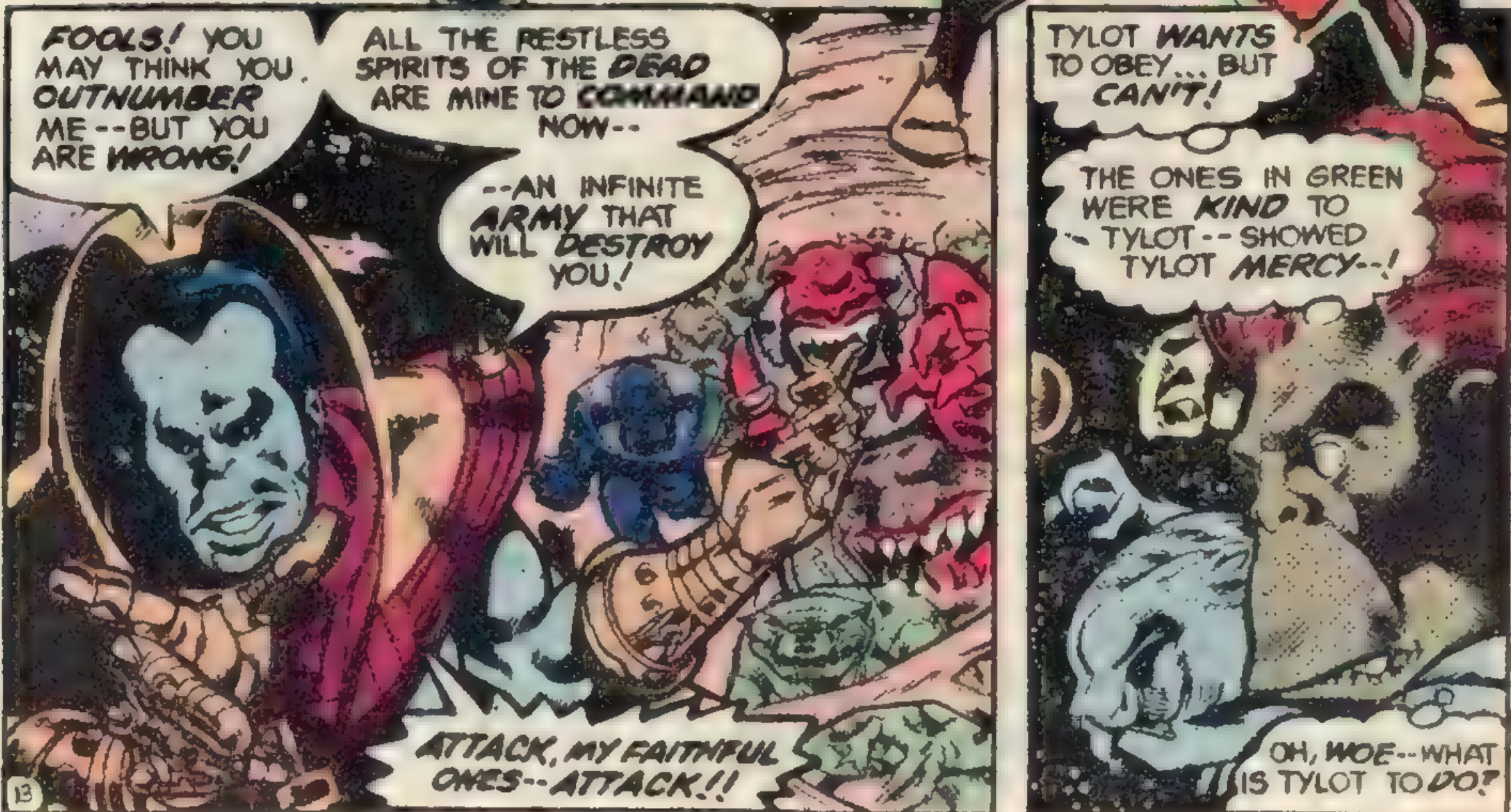
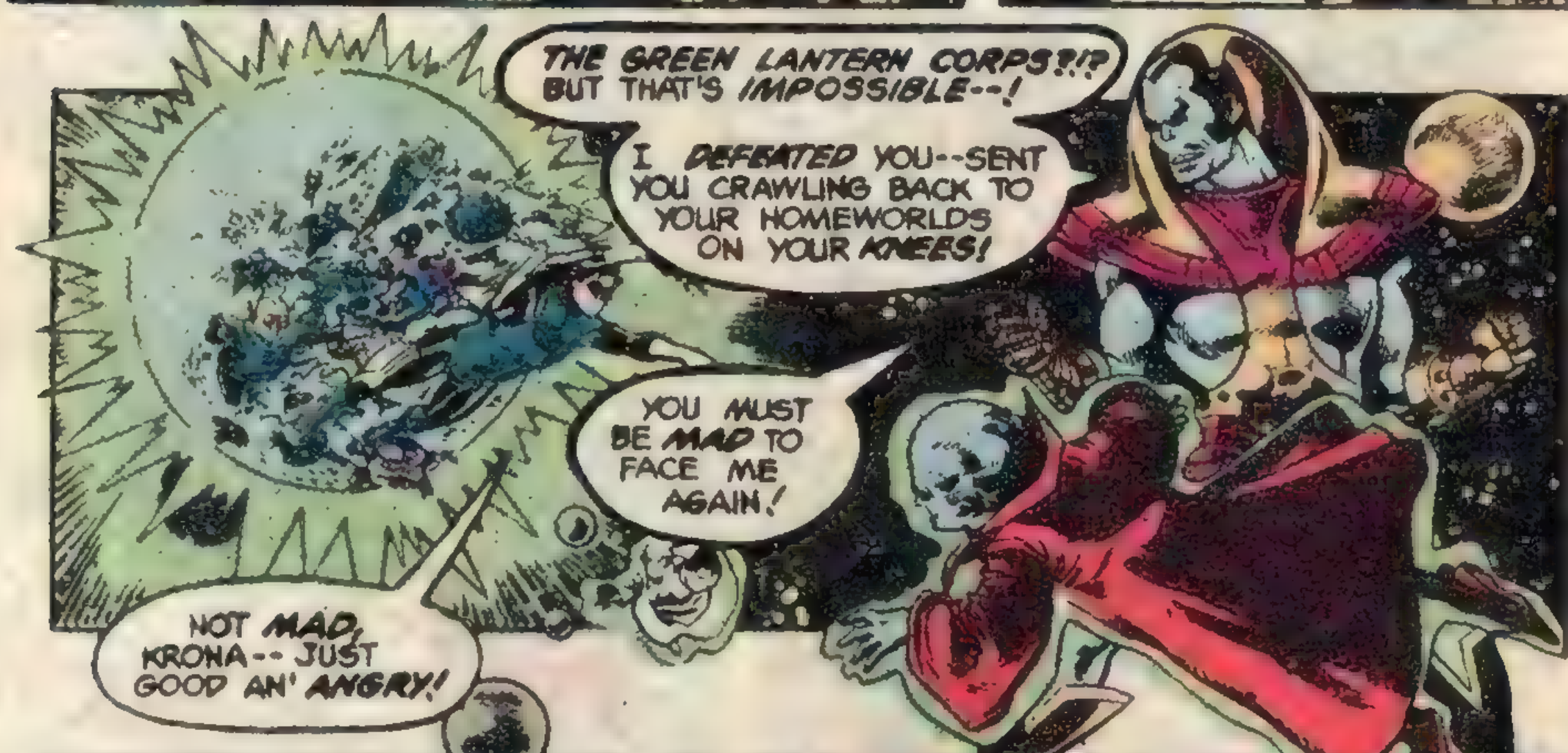
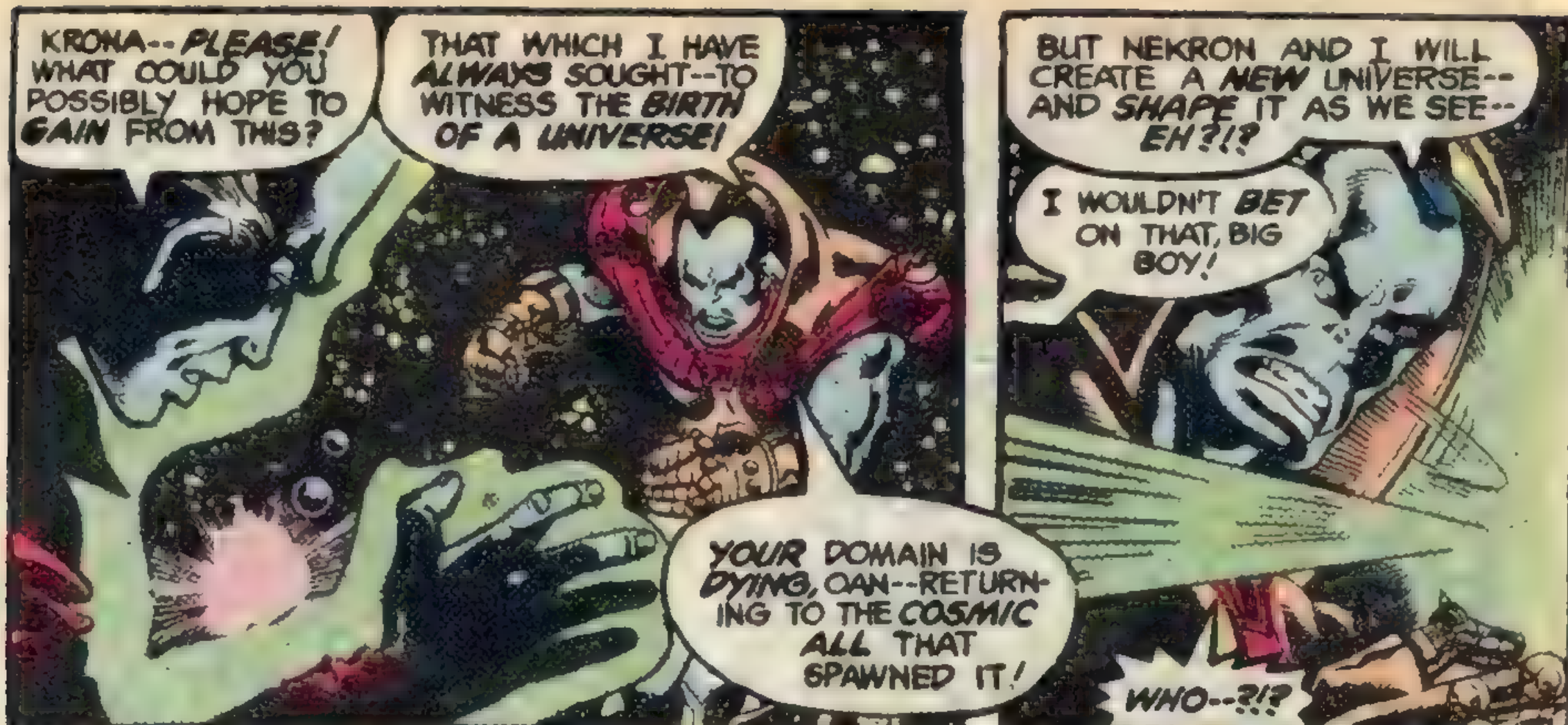
SOON, AFTER AN ETERNITY OF IMPRISONMENT, I WILL BE FREE!

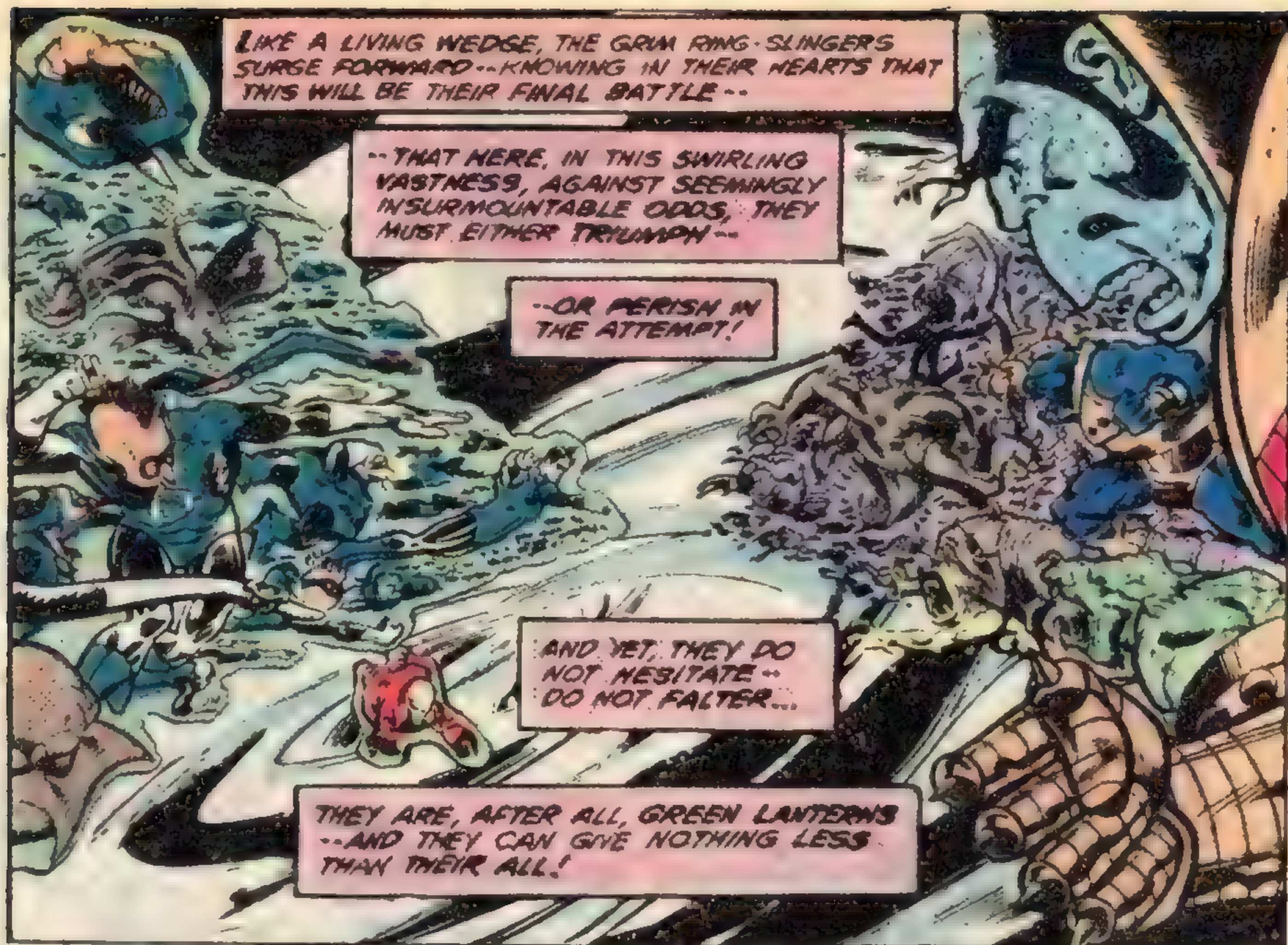
AYE...

...SOON.

--OF COMMANDING THIS CELESTIAL LIMBOLAND WHERE SOULS BEYOND NUMBERING AWAIT THEIR FINAL JUDGMENT...

...SOON ALL THE JOYS AND SORROWS WHICH ONLY THE LIVING MAY KNOW WILL BE MINE TO TASTE AND SHARE...





LIKE A LIVING WEDGE, THE GRIM RING-SLINGERS
SURGE FORWARD--KNOWING IN THEIR HEARTS THAT
THIS WILL BE THEIR FINAL BATTLE--

--THAT HERE, IN THIS SWIRLING
VASTNESS, AGAINST SEEMINGLY
INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS, THEY
MUST EITHER TRIUMPH--

--OR PERISH IN
THE ATTEMPT!

AND YET, THEY DO
NOT HESITATE--
DO NOT FALTER...

THEY ARE, AFTER ALL, GREEN LANTERNS
--AND THEY CAN GIVE NOTHING LESS
THAN THEIR ALL!



STRUGGLE ON, FOOLS--
FOR ALL THE GOOD IT
WILL DO YOU!

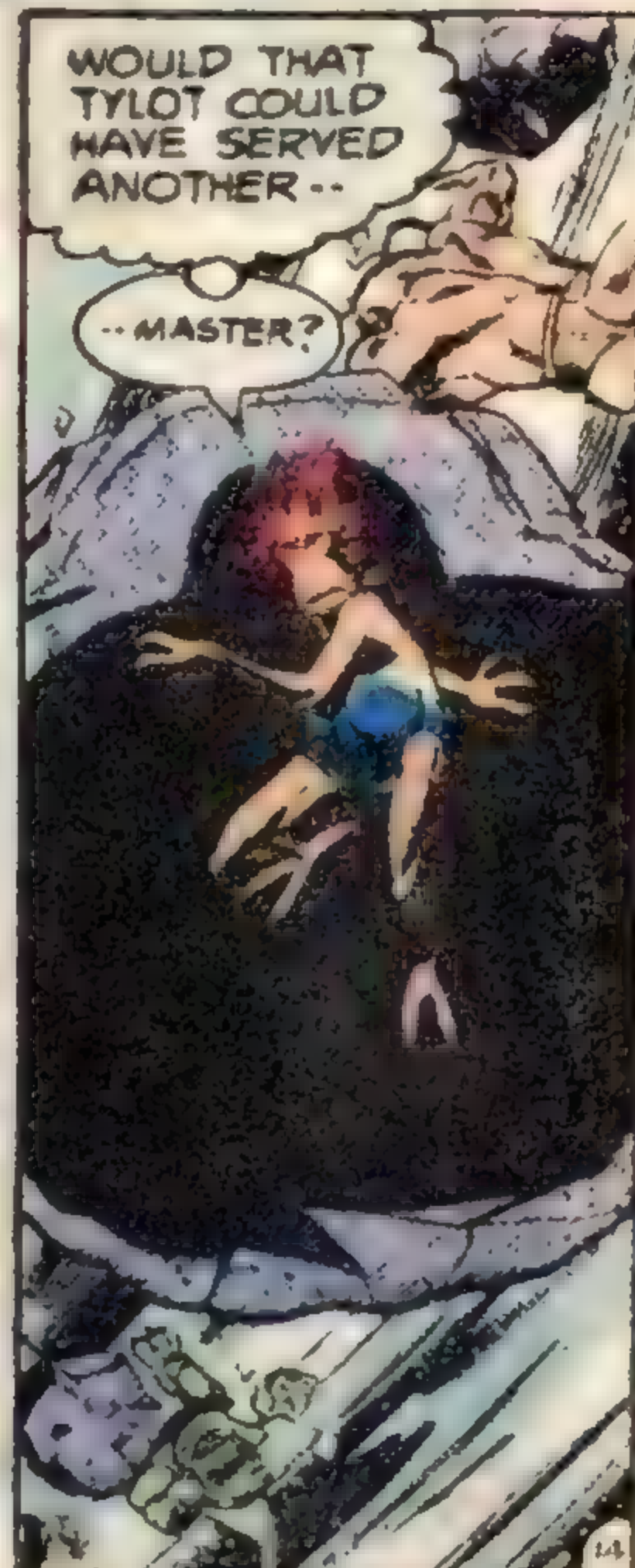
THE INSTANT
AFTER YOUR
RINGS RUN OUT
OF POWER,
YOU ARE LOST--

--AND YOUR
UNIVERSE
AS WELL!



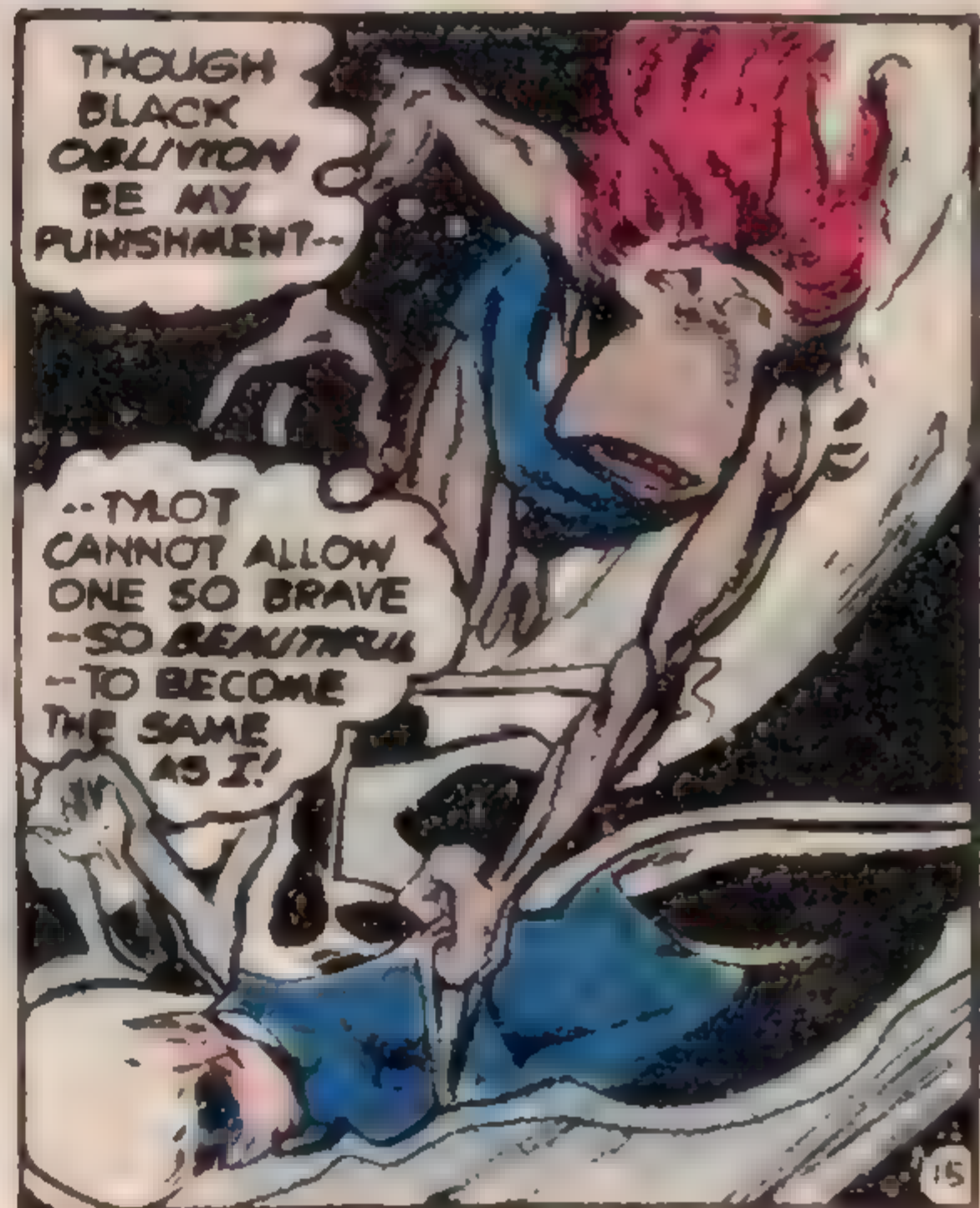
LOOK AT THEM...
SO STRONG... SO
VALIANT...

WOULD THAT
TYLOT COULD HAVE
BEEN LIKE THEM...



WOULD THAT
TYLOT COULD
HAVE SERVED
ANOTHER--

--MASTER?





NO MATTER
WHAT MY FATE
NOW, TYLOT WILL
FACE IT--WITHOUT
FEAR!

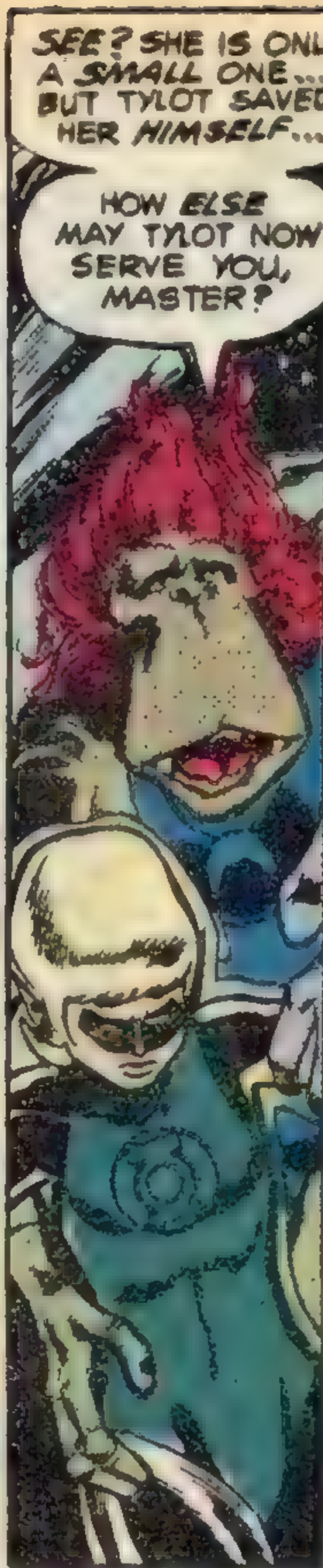


YOU KNOW, LITTLE
MAN--I HONESTLY
BELIEVE YOU WILL!

YOU!?

PLEASE, NOBLE
ONE-- ~~SPACE~~
TYLOT!

YOUR CAUSE
IS ~~MINE~~
NOW!



SEE? SHE IS ONLY
A SMALL ONE...
BUT TYLOT SAVED
HER HIMSELF...

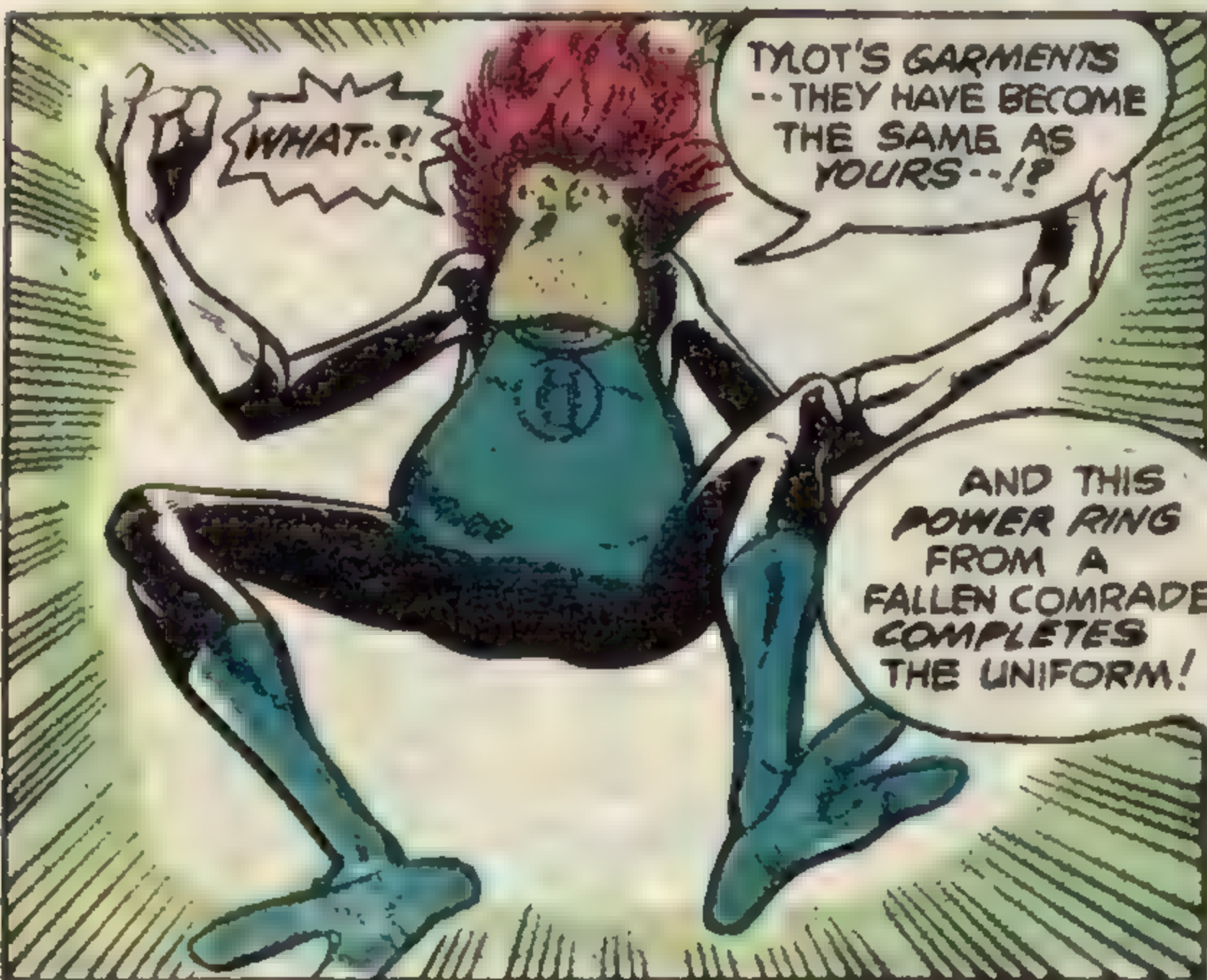
HOW ELSE
MAY TYLOT NOW
SERVE YOU,
MASTER?



FIRST, YOU CAN
STOP CALLING ME
"MASTER"! WE'RE
ALL EQUALS HERE!

IF YOU'RE TRULY
ONE OF US NOW,
LITTLE MAN--
AND MY RING TELLS
ME YOU ARE--

--YOU MAY
AS WELL LOOK
THE PART!



WHAT!?

TYLOT'S GARMENTS
--THEY HAVE BECOME
THE SAME AS
YOURS--!?

AND THIS
POWER RING
FROM A
FALLEN COMRADE
COMPLETES
THE UNIFORM!



AS OF NOW,
TYLOT--YOU'RE
A GREEN
LANTERN!



GO OUT AND
MAKE US PROUD!



WHILE... OBSTINATE CREATURES, YOU CAN NEVER DEFEAT ME!

MINE IS POWER BEYOND COMPREHENSION -- DRAWN FROM THE SOULS AND SPIRITS OF ALL WHO HAVE EVER DIED!

BEHOLD MY POWER, MORTALS... AND DESPAIR!

EACH FOE I FEEL IS REPLACED BY TWO OTHERS!

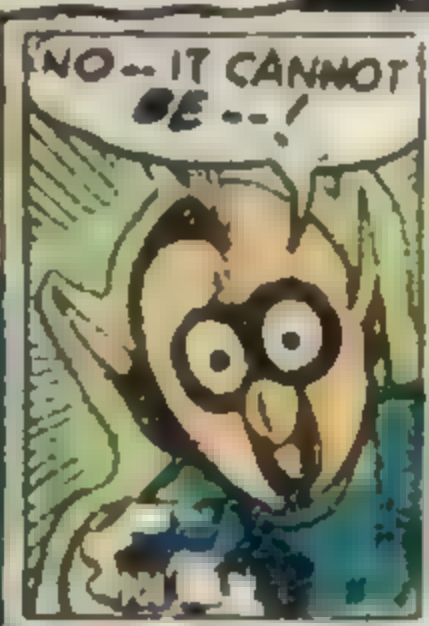
THEN WHY NOT SURRENDER, TOMAR-RE -- WHILE YOU STILL CAN!



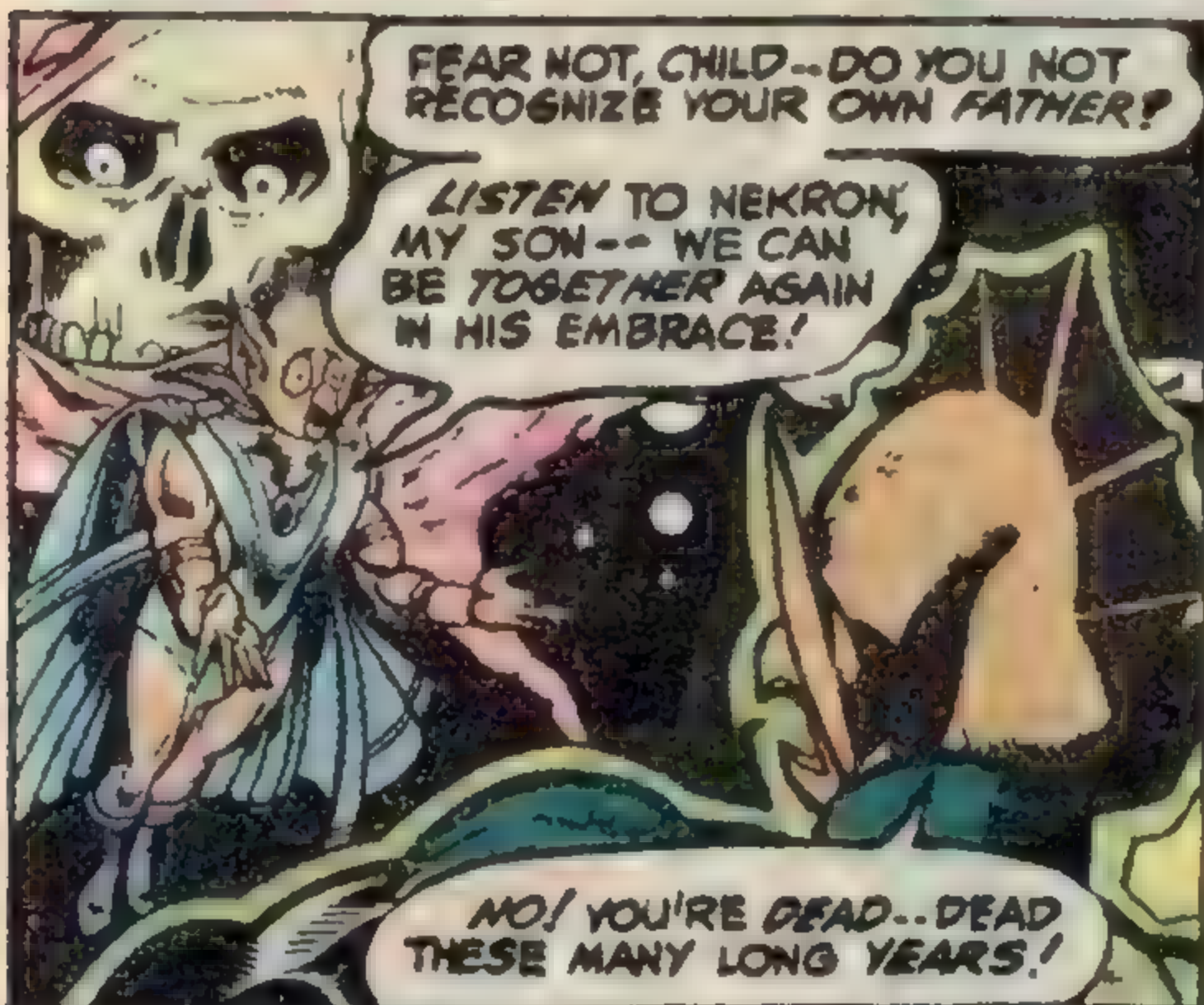
THIS BATTLE IS MADDENING!



THAT VOICE--!



NO-- IT CANNOT BE--!



FEAR NOT, CHILD-- DO YOU NOT RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN FATHER?

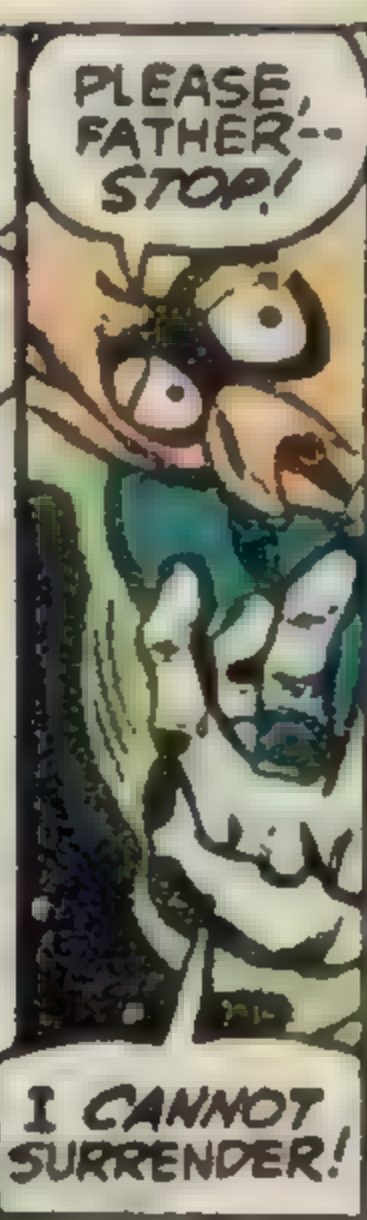
LISTEN TO NEKRON, MY SON-- WE CAN BE TOGETHER AGAIN IN HIS EMBRACE!

NO! YOU'RE DEAD-- DEAD THESE MANY LONG YEARS!



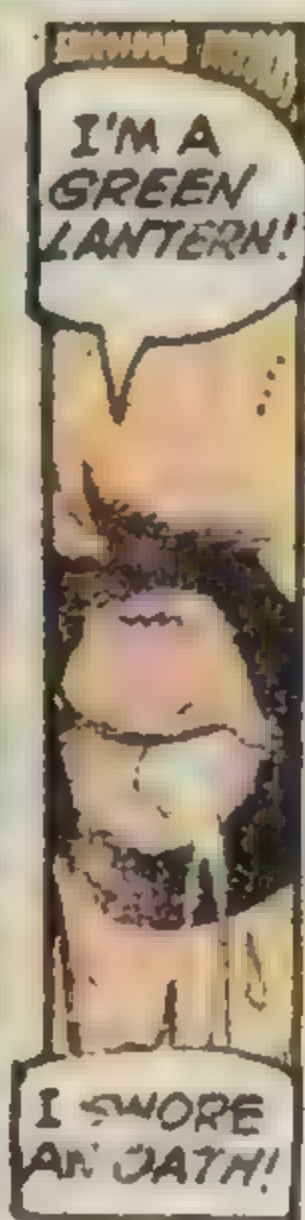
DO NOT TORTURE YOURSELF, MY SON! LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS...

...AND JOIN ME!



PLEASE, FATHER-- STOP!

I CANNOT SURRENDER!



I'M A GREEN LANTERN!

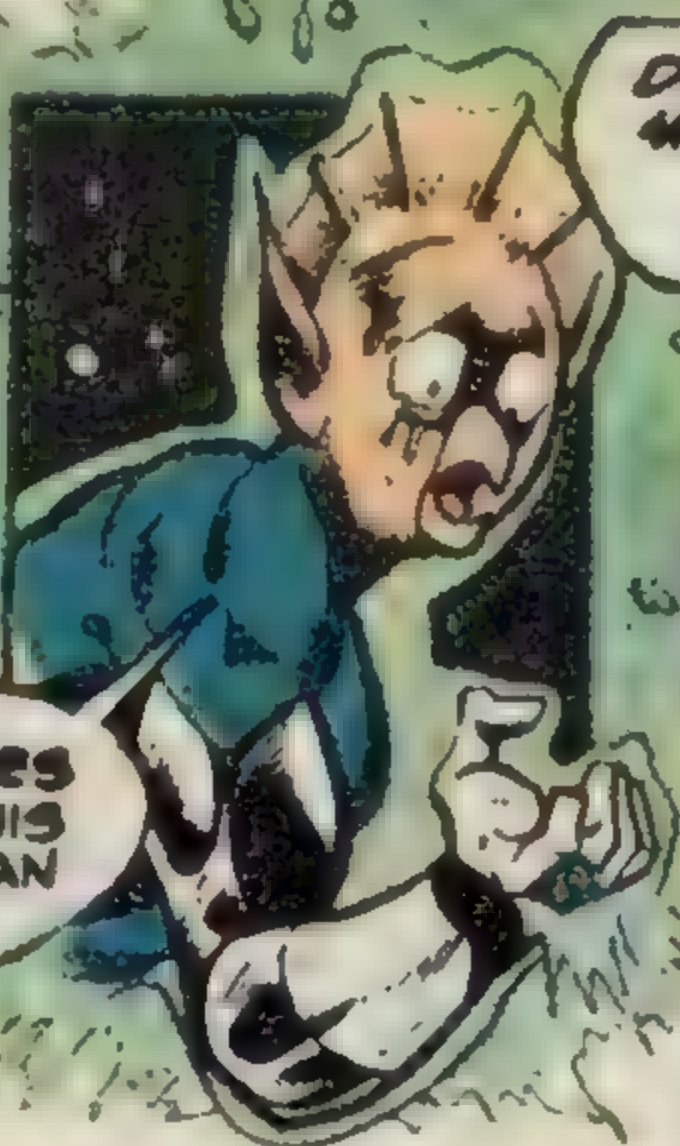
I SWORE AN OATH!



AND I CANNOT BETRAY THAT OATH-- NO MATTER THE COST!

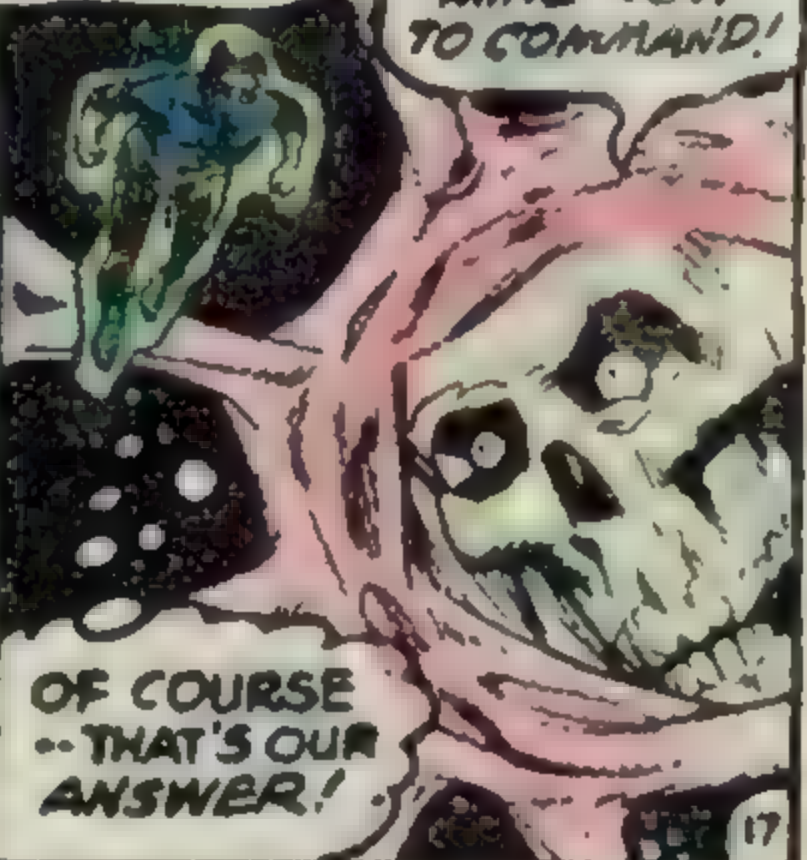
GONE... MY OWN FATHER'S SPIRIT UTTERLY DESTROYED...

OH, GOD-- SOMETIMES THE WEIGHT OF THIS RING IS MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!

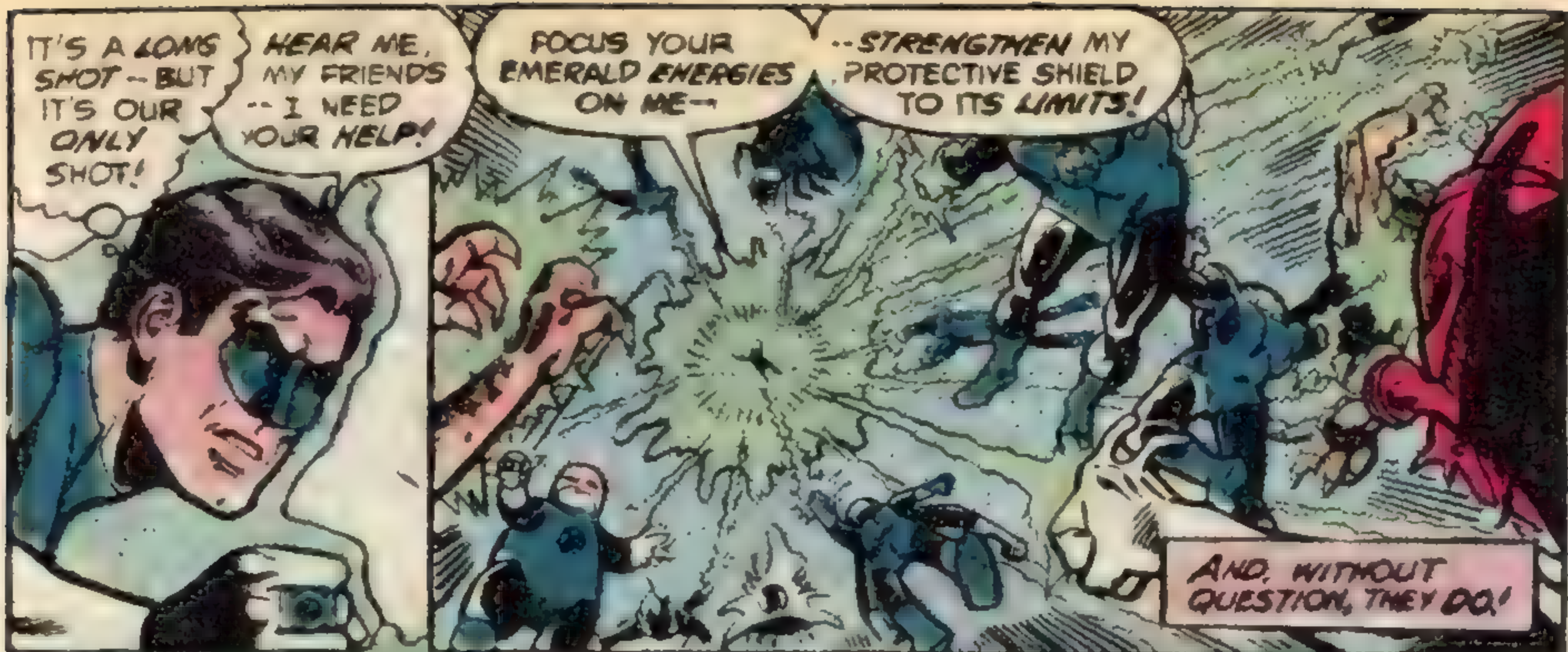


DO YOU SEE, MORTALS-- YOUR CAUSE IS HOPELESS!

ANYONE WHO HAS EVER LIVED IS MINE VOW TO COMMAND!



OF COURSE -- THAT'S OUR ANSWER!



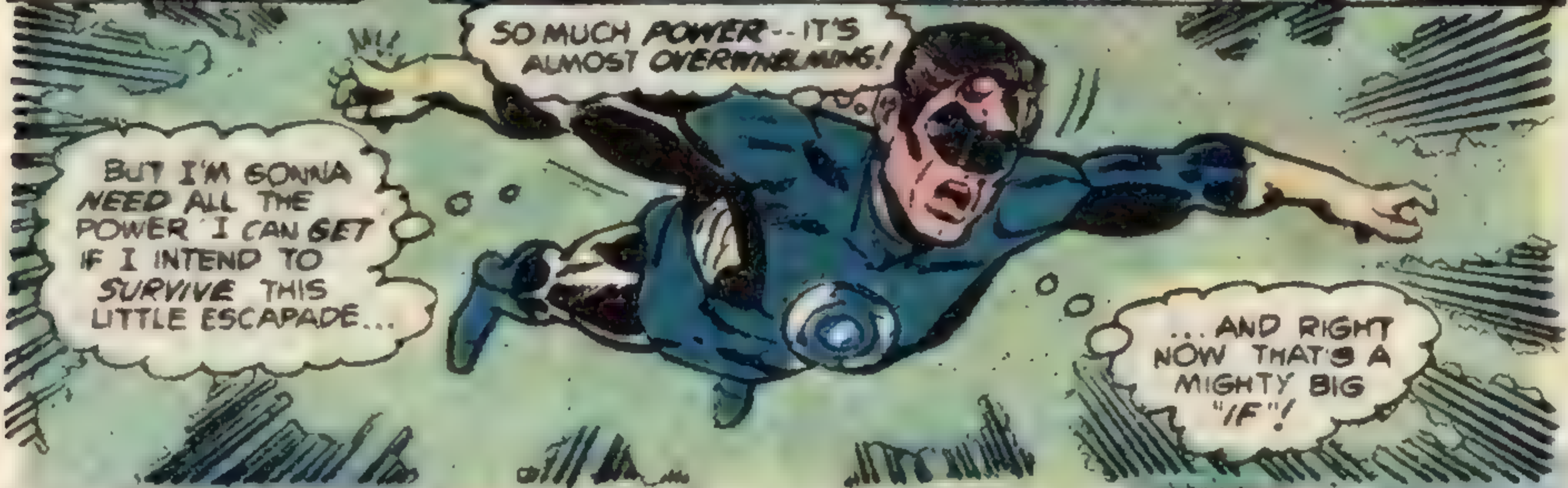
IT'S A LONG SHOT-- BUT IT'S OUR ONLY SHOT!

HEAR ME, MY FRIENDS -- I NEED YOUR HELP!

FOCUS YOUR EMERALD ENERGIES ON ME--

--STRENGTHEN MY PROTECTIVE SHIELD TO ITS LIMITS!

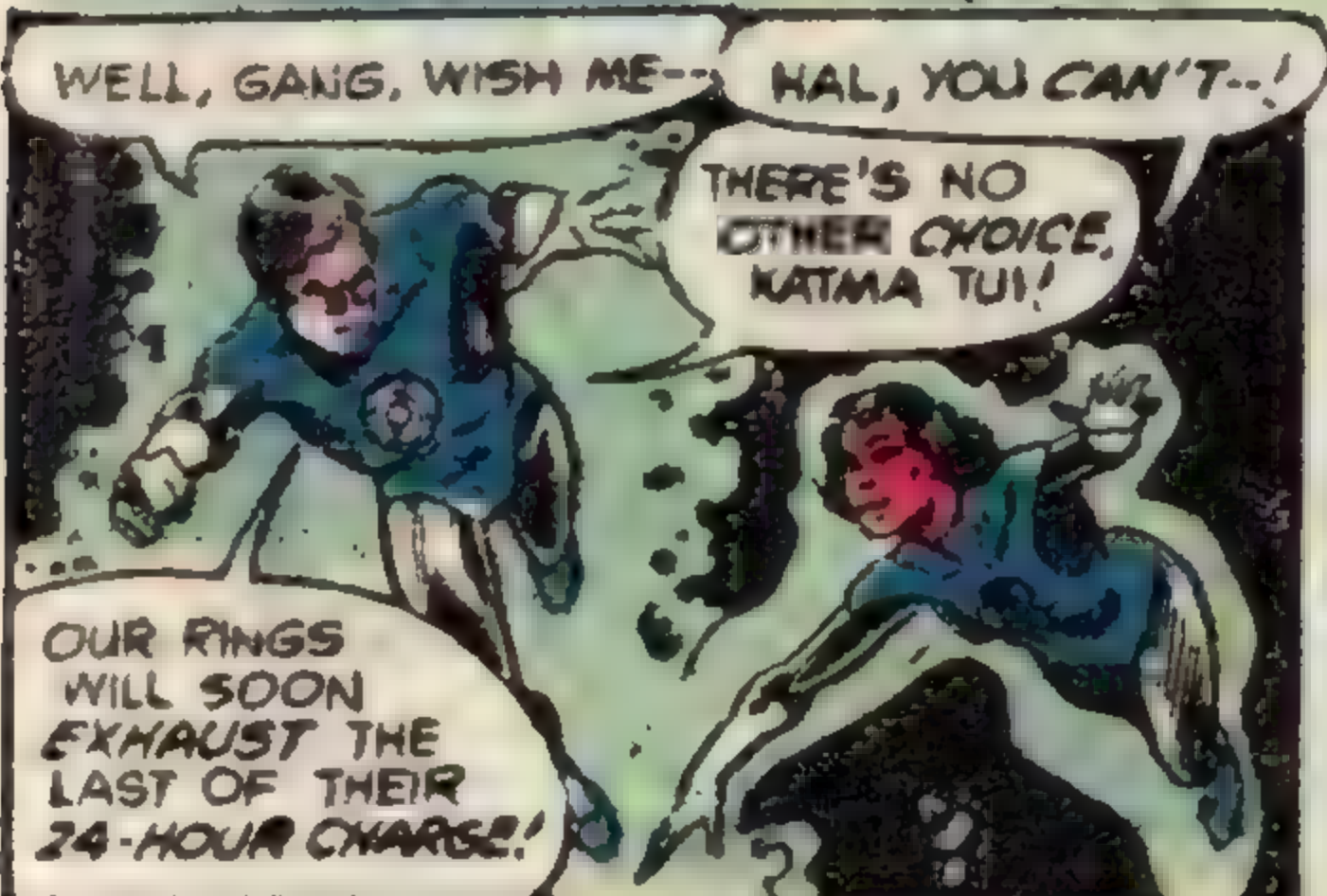
AND, WITHOUT QUESTION, THEY DO!



SO MUCH POWER-- IT'S ALMOST OVERWHELMING!

BUT I'M GONNA NEED ALL THE POWER I CAN GET IF I INTEND TO SURVIVE THIS LITTLE ESCAPE...

...AND RIGHT NOW THAT'S A MIGHTY BIG "IF"!



WELL, GANG, WISH ME--

HAL, YOU CAN'T--!

THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE, KATMA TUI!

OUR RINGS WILL SOON EXHAUST THE LAST OF THEIR 24-HOUR CHARGE!



THEN I GIVE YOU MY PRAYERS, MY GOOD AND PRECIOUS FRIEND--

--AND A KISS TO SPEED YOU ON YOUR WAY!



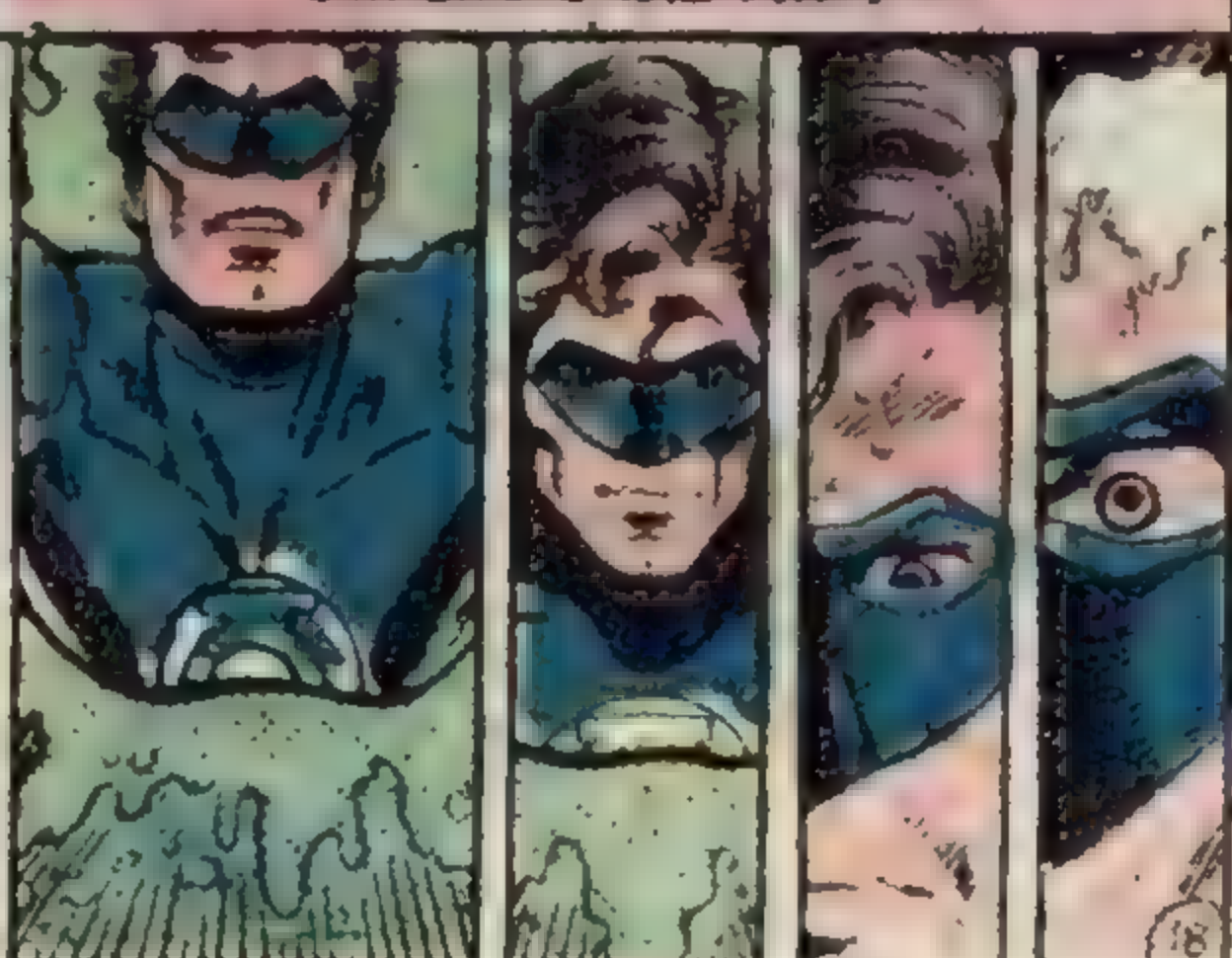
IT IS A GESTURE OF YOUR PEOPLE, NOT OF MINE--

--BUT PERHAPS IT WILL WARM YOU IN THE COLD PLACES!

PLEASE, HAL -- COME BACK TO US!

BELIEVE ME, ARISIA-- I'LL TRY!

AND, WITH THAT, HAL JORDAN HURLS HIMSELF HEADLONG THROUGH THE DIMENSIONAL RIFT--



--AND INTO
THE DREAD
DOMAIN OF
THE LORD
OF THE
UNLIVING!

SO COLD HERE--IT'S
DISSOLVING MY ENERGY-
SHIELD--!

AND ONCE THAT
SHIELD COLLAPSES
-- MY BUTT BELONGS
TO NEKRON!

YOU MUST
BE MAD,
MORTAL-- TO
CONFRONT ME
HERE ALONE!

BUT I'M NOT
ALONE, SKULL-FACE!

YOU SAID IT
YOURSELF: EVERY-
ONE WHO HAS EVER
DIED IS HERE NOW...

... AND THAT
INCLUDES A
LOT OF LATE
GREEN
LANTERNS!

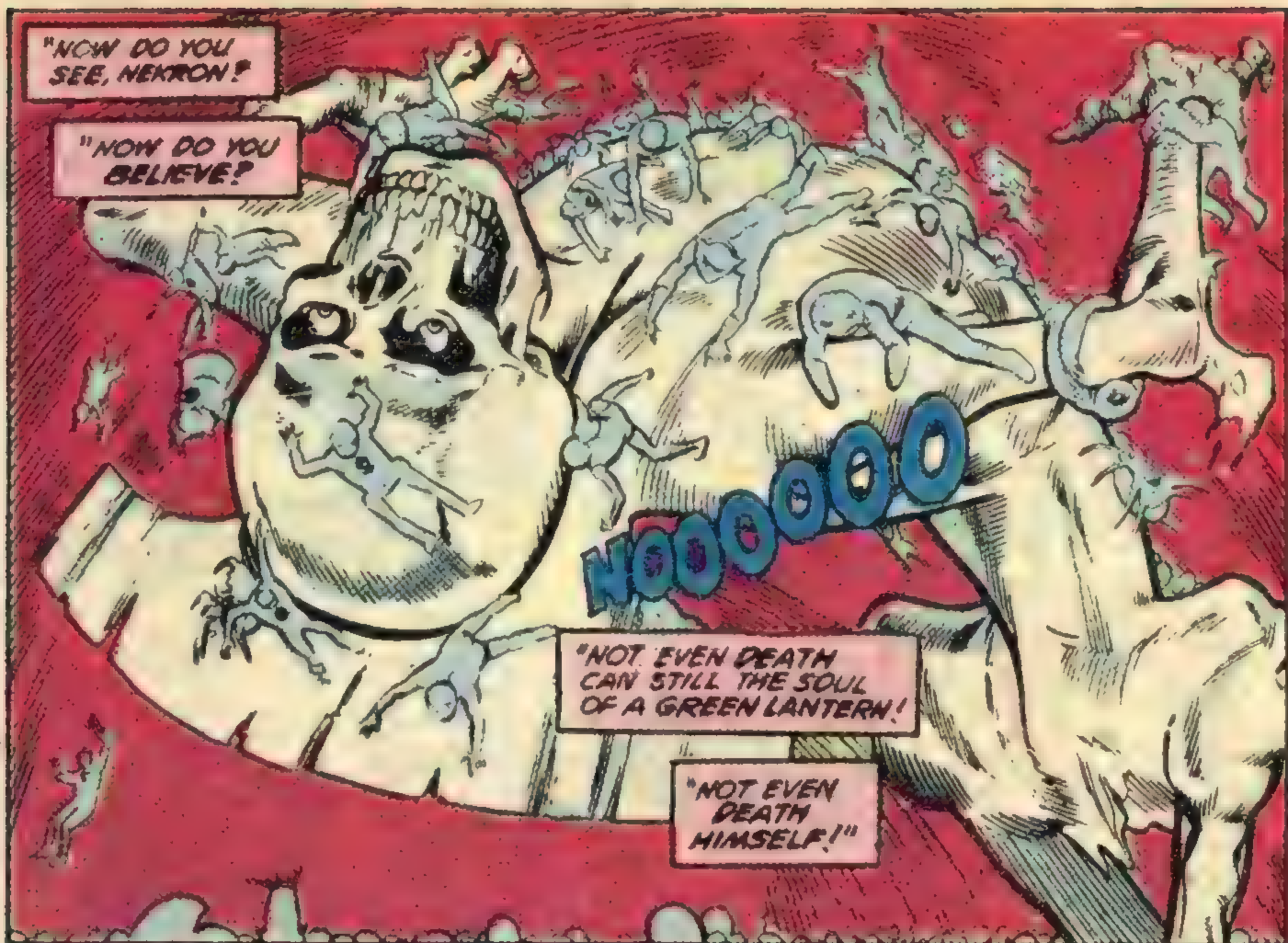
LOOK AT
THEIR SPIRITS
CAREFULLY,
NEKRON--FOR
THEY ARE
A BREED
APART!

"--AND I'M BETTING NOT
EVEN DEATH COULD EX-
TINGUISH THE SPARK OF
THE FLAME WHICH DROVE
THEM..."

NO--IT CANNOT
BE--!

THESE SPIRITS
DEFFY ME--
IGNORE MY
COMMANDS--!

"THEY WERE
BEINGS WHO
DIED FOR A
PURPOSE--
TO PRESERVE
AN IDEAL--"



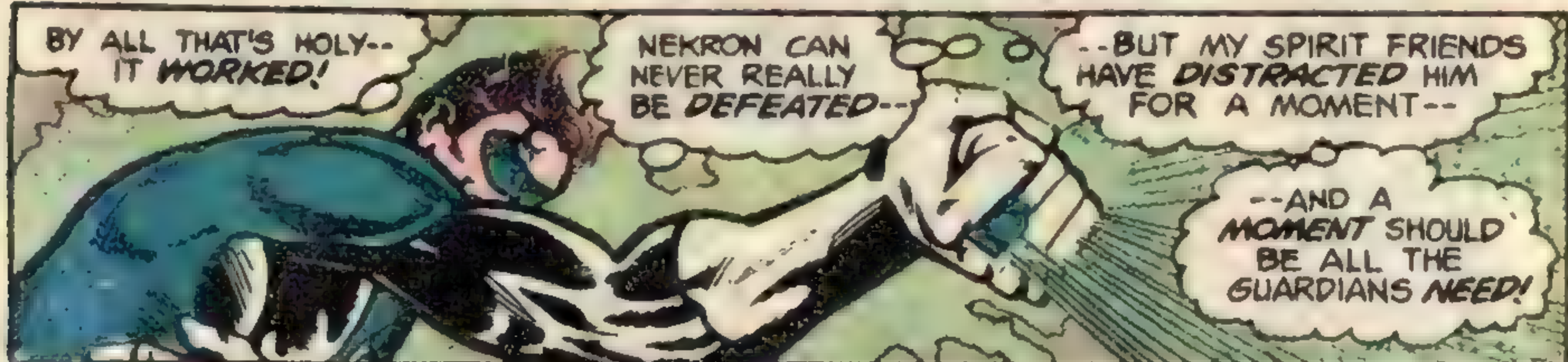
"NOW DO YOU
SEE, NEKRON?"

"NOW DO YOU
BELIEVE?"

NOOOOOOOO

"NOT EVEN DEATH
CAN STILL THE SOUL
OF A GREEN LANTERN!"

"NOT EVEN
DEATH
HIMSELF!"

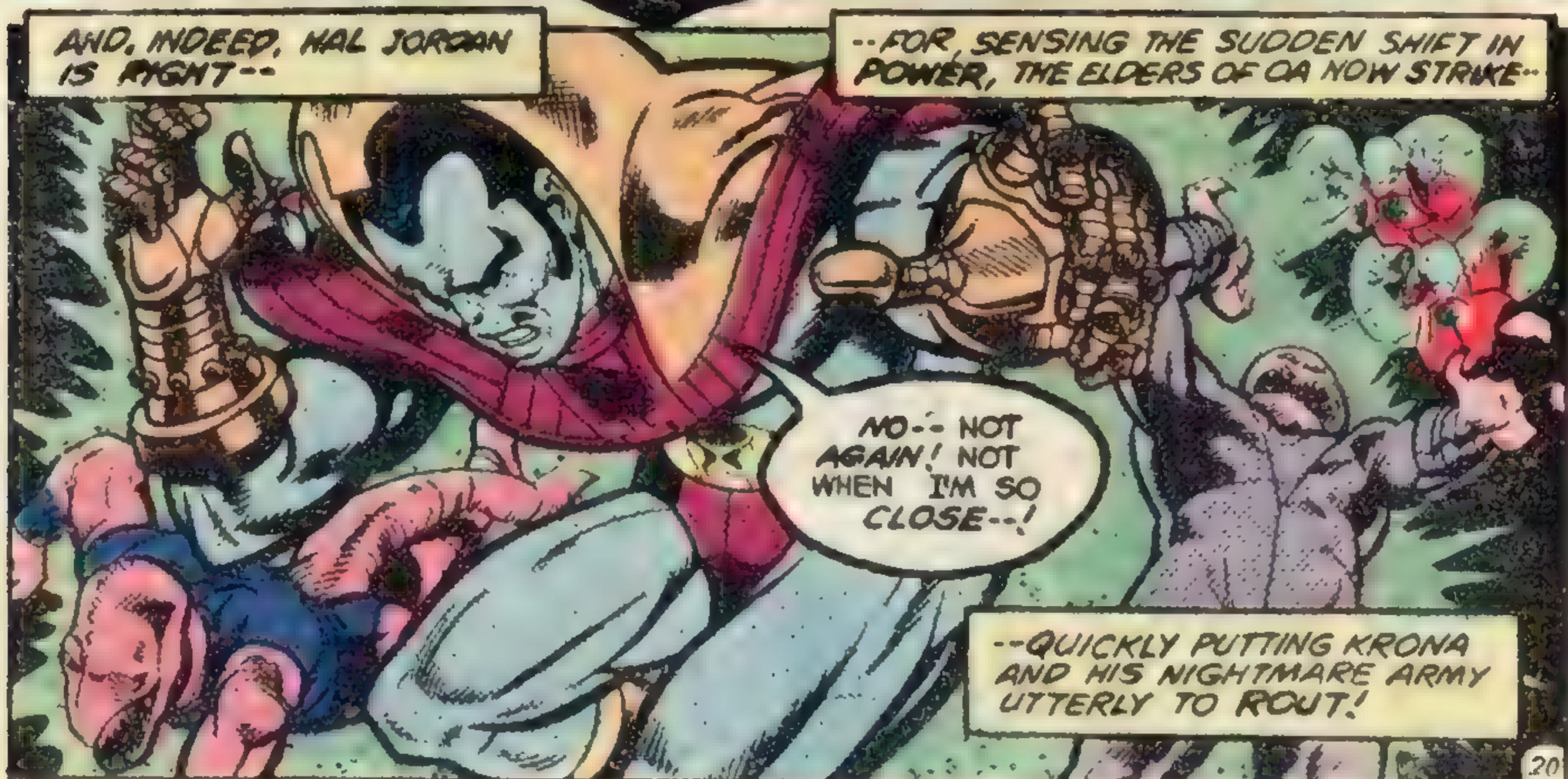


BY ALL THAT'S HOLY--
IT WORKED!

NEKRON CAN
NEVER REALLY
BE DEFEATED--

--BUT MY SPIRIT FRIENDS
HAVE DISTRACTED HIM
FOR A MOMENT--

--AND A
MOMENT SHOULD
BE ALL THE
GUARDIANS NEED!



AND, INDEED, HAL JORDAN
IS RIGHT--

--FOR, SENSING THE SUDDEN SHIFT IN
POWER, THE ELDERS OF OA NOW STRIKE--

NO-- NOT
AGAIN! NOT
WHEN I'M SO
CLOSE--!

--QUICKLY PUTTING KRONA
AND HIS NIGHTMARE ARMY
UTTERLY TO ROUT!

LIKE CATTLE, KRONA AND HIS FORCES ARE HERDED BACK THROUGH THE DIMENSIONAL RIFT, SCREAMING IN FRUSTRATED RAGE ALL THE WAY--

YOU HAVE NOT HEARD THE LAST OF ME, OANS--

I SWEAR-- NOT THE LAST!

--AND THEN, BEFORE NEKRON CAN ONCE MORE INTERVENE THE WOUND IN THE SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE IS QUICKLY HEALED...

KRONA AND HIS CRONES ARE BACK--

SOMEHOW, MY FRIENDS AND COMRADES HAVE WON--

IN ANOTHER FEW SECONDS, MY PROTECTIVE AURA WILL BE GONE--

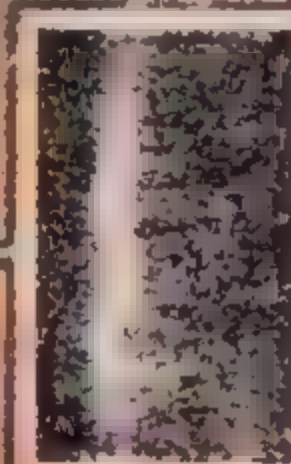
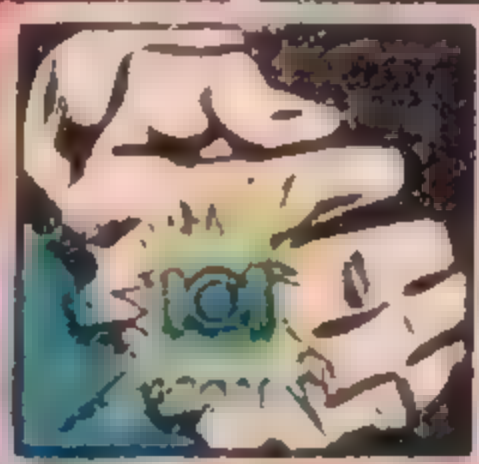
STILL, IT'S MY LIFE IN EXCHANGE FOR UNTOLD TRILLIONS OF OTHERS--

--AND THE DIMENSION WARP IS GROWING SMALLER--!

--AND I'LL BE CONSUMED BY THIS DEADLY DIMENSION!

--BUT TOO LATE TO DO ME ANY GOOD!

--AND ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD TRADE!



THEN, SUDDENLY, IN THE INSTANT BEFORE OBLIVION, HAL JORDAN SENSES-- RATHER THAN FEELS --TWO EPHEMERAL HANDS THRUST HIM TOWARD THE RAPIDLY-SHRINKING WARP BETWEEN DIMENSIONS...

AND HE THINKS HE HEARS A VOICE LIKE AN AUTUMN BREEZE SOFTLY WHISPER:

WELL DONE, MY BRAVE SUCCESSOR... ABIN SUR IS PROUD...

THEN THE DARKNESS OVERWHELMS HIM.

AND WHEN HAL JORDAN ONCE MORE STRUGGLES BACK TO A LIGHT HE HAD NEVER AGAIN EXPECTED TO SEE...

IS HE WELL, KATHA TUI?

HE'S ALIVE, EDDORE -- THAT'S ENOUGH!

AYE-- BUT FOR HOW LONG?

WE ONLY HAVE A FEW MORE SECONDS BEFORE OUR POWER RINGS FAIL US--

-- BUT AT LEAST WE'LL DIE TOGETHER--!

NO, ARISIA-- THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN TOO MUCH DEATH.

DO NOT FORGET WE GUARDIANS ARE LIVING POWER BATTERIES, SUBJECT TO NO TIME LIMIT!

WE SHALL PROTECT YOU ALL UNTIL WE RETURN TO OA!

YOUR WORK IS DONE!

AND, EVEN AS THE GUARDIANS SPEAK, THE STARS AND PLANETS WHICH, MOMENTS BEFORE, HAD BEEN SWIRLING TOWARDS DESTRUCTION, RETURN TO THEIR PROPER PLACES IN THE CELESTIAL TAPESTRY--

-- AND ALL IS ONCE MORE RIGHT WITH THE UNIVERSE!

WELL, LOOK WHO'S STILL WITH US! ARISIA TELLS ME YOU'RE QUITE A HERO, LITTLE ONE!

TYLOT DID GOOD?

TYLOT DID GREAT!

THEN TYLOT HAS REDEEMED HIMSELF ... AND TYLOT'S SPIRIT SOARS...

THANK YOU... MY FRIENDS...

"NOW CAN TYLOT GO TO HIS ETERNAL REST."

... TRULY HAPPY...

AND IN AN INSTANT, ONLY THE RING REMAINS.

QA, SOMETIME LATER:

-- AND CHARGED WITH THE ELECTRICAL ZEST OF CELEBRATION!

I GIVE YOU A TOAST,
MY CHILDREN.

TO YOUR BRAVE
BROTHERS AND SISTERS
WHO PERISHED THAT OUR
UNIVERSE MIGHT SURVIVE!

IN OUR MINDS
AND HEARTS, THEY
SHALL LIVE FOREVER!

AND SO IT GOES, A TIME
OF REJOICING AND
REFLECTION AND RENEWAL.

THE SKIES
OVER THIS
LEGENDARY
WORLD ARE
NOW BRIGHT
AGAIN, GLITTER-
ING WITH A
VAST PANOPLY
OF STARS--

AND WHEN, AT LAST, AS SUCH THINGS
MUST, THE CELEBRATION ENDS...

YOU SUMMONED
ME, GUARDIANS--?

AYE, HAL JORDAN--THERE IS SOMETHING OF
GRAVE IMPORTANCE WE WISH TO DISCUSS
WITH YOU!

SINCE THE DAY YOU FIRST
ACCEPTED ABIN SUR'S POWER
RING, YOU HAVE DONE
GREAT HONOR TO THE
NAME GREEN LANTERN--

--AND WE
ARE WELL
PLEASED!

NOW IT IS WE WHO
WISH TO HONOR YOU!



BEHOLD THE **CRIMSON MANTLE OF COMMAND** -- THE SYMBOL OF HIM WHO WOULD BECOME OUR PROUD CORPS' **LEADER!**

FROM THIS MOMENT FORTH, HAL JORDAN-- IT IS **YOURS!**

M-M-MINE--?



EXALTED ONES, I AM **STUNNED**--AND **FLATTERED** BEYOND WORDS--

--BUT I'M NOTHING **SPECIAL**--NO DIFFERENT THAN ANY **OTHER** RING-SLINGER!

I'VE ONLY DONE WHAT **ANY** GL WOULD HAVE DONE, GIVEN THE **CHANCE!**



SO I'M AFRAID I HAVE TO **DECLINE** YOUR GENEROUS OFFER, **GUARDIANS!**

WHEN IT COMES RIGHT DOWN TO IT-- I GUESS I'M JUST **ONE OF THE GANG!**

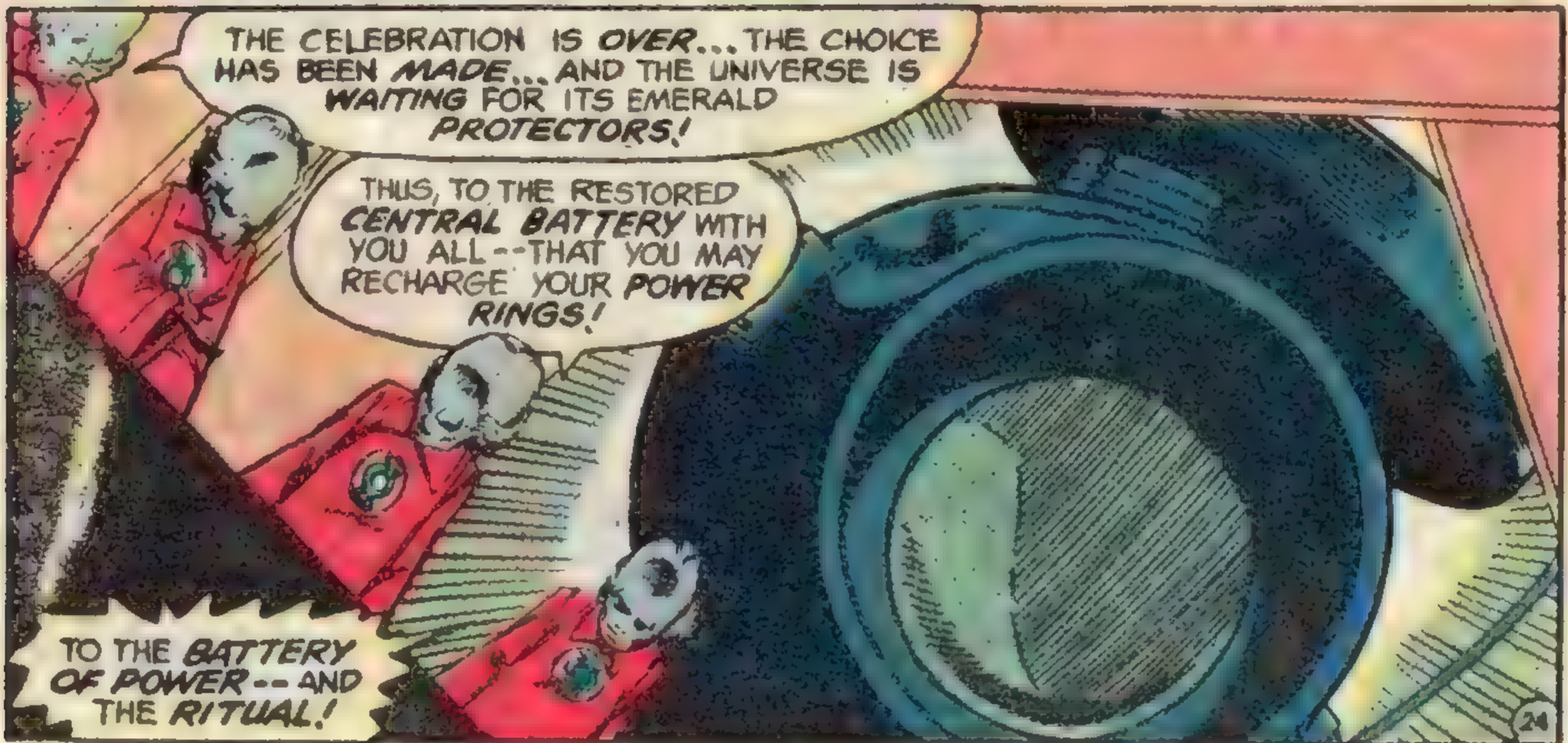


INDEED YOU ARE, HAL JORDAN!

AND WE COULDN'T BE MORE **PROUD!**

GLAD WE HAVEN'T **LOST** YOU, BIG BROTHER!

AYE-- SO SAY WE **ALL!**



THE CELEBRATION IS OVER... THE CHOICE HAS BEEN **MADE**... AND THE UNIVERSE IS **WAITING** FOR ITS **EMERALD PROTECTORS!**

THUS, TO THE RESTORED **CENTRAL BATTERY** WITH YOU ALL-- THAT YOU MAY **RECHARGE** YOUR **POWER RINGS!**

TO THE **BATTERY OF POWER**-- AND THE **RITUAL!**

WITHOUT HESITATION, THE ASSEMBLED GREEN LANTERN CORPS TOUCH THEIR EMERALD RINGS TO THE GIANT BATTERY TO DRAW STRENGTH FOR ANOTHER DAY--

AS COUNTLESS VOICES SPEAK AS ONE, IN TRIBUTE TO ONE OF THEIR OWN...

IN BRIGHTEST DAY,
IN BLACKEST NIGHT,
NO EVIL SHALL ESCAPE
OUR SIGHT!
LET THOSE WHO WORSHIP
EVIL'S MIGHT
BEWARE OUR POWER--
GREEN LANTERN'S
LIGHT!

HONORED GREETINGS,
HAL JORDAN OF EARTH!

HONORED GREETINGS
TO THE NOBLEST
OF US ALL!

AND HAL
JORDAN CRIES,
OPENLY AND
WITHOUT
SHAME--

--UNTIL A SOFT, FAMILIAR
VOICE DISTRACTS HIM...

Y'KNOW, HAL, I WAS
REALLY WORRIED
ABOUT BEING A
GREEN LANTERN--

OH?

--BUT AFTER
TODAY, I
CAN'T
THINK OF
ANYTHING
I'D RATHER
BE!

WELCOME TO THE CLUB,
LITTLE SISTER--

WELCOME
TO THE
CLUB!!

WOW.
OH
WOW!

AND
SO IT
GOES...

CITY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL,
AS TWILIGHT LOSES ITS DAILY
BATTLE WITH THE DARK...

THAT POOR MAN...
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING
THEY CAN DO FOR
HIM?

NOTHING THEY
HAVEN'T ALREADY
TRIED, HONEY!

BUT HE'S SUCH
A WEALTHY
MAN--HE CAN
AFFORD
TREATMENTS--!

THERE AREN'T
ANY TREAT-
MENTS FOR
WHAT HE HAS,
GIRL--THERE
ISN'T EVEN A
NAME FOR IT YET!

...AND ALL THE MONEY IN
THE WORLD WON'T CHANGE
THE FACT THAT MR. LEE
TRAVIS HAS LESS THAN
ONE WEEK TO LIVE!

WE ONLY
KNOW THAT
HIS
CONDITION IS
INOOPERABLE...
INCURABLE...

SO THIS IS THE WAY MY
WORLD ENDS, EH? NOT
WITH A BANG, AS BEFITS
A MAN OF ACTION-- BUT
WITH A WHIMPER! O

AFTER ALL I'VE
SACRIFICED, IT
DOESN'T SEEM
FAIR SOMEHOW!

IT JUST
DOESN'T
SEEM
FAIR!

ONCE HE WAS A
SUPER-HERO, A
RELENTLESS FORCE
FOR JUSTICE IN
AN ALL-TOO-
UNJUST WORLD--
THEN, SUDDENLY,
INEXPLICABLY, HE
VANISHED FROM
THE FACE OF THE
EARTH!

NOW, JOIN LEN WEIN: writer/ ALEX SAVTUK &
DENNIS JENSEN: artists/ JOHN COSTANZA: letterer/
GENE D'ANGELO: colorist/ and JULIUS SCHWARTZ:
editor-- TO DISCOVER...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...
THE CRIMSON
AVENGER?

"ALL MY LIFE, I'VE FOUGHT FOR WHAT WAS RIGHT, FIRST, AS THE CRUSADING YOUNG PUBLISHER OF THE DAILY GLOBE-LEADER--

HELP STOP ORGANIZED CRIME

"--AND THEN, WHEN THAT DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ENOUGH, AS THE MIDNIGHT MANSTALKER CALLED THE CRIMSON AVENSER...

"...UNTIL, AS ONE OF THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY, I BATTLED THE MONSTROUS NEBULA-MAN--

"--AND FOUND MYSELF THROWN THROUGH THE TIME-BARRIER BY THE SHEER FORCE OF THE CREATURE'S DESTRUCTION...

"IT TOOK THE COMBINED NIGHT OF THE JUSTICE SOCIETY AND JUSTICE LEAGUE TO FREE US SEVEN SOLDIERS FROM OUR VARIOUS TIME-TRAPS..."

* As detailed in JUSTICE LEAGUE #100.--JULIE

"...AND I RETURNED AT LAST TO THE 20TH CENTURY, ALBEIT SEVERAL DECADES LATER."

"ALTHOUGH I HAD AGED ONLY A FEW MONTHS DURING MY ORDEAL, I WAS SUDDENLY A STRANGER IN A WORLD I HAD NOT MADE..."

"I WAS TIRED, DISILLUSIONED--AND IT SEEMED THAT, WHILE I WAS GONE, OTHERS MORE QUALIFIED HAD APPEARED TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT..."

"...SO THE CRIMSON AVENSER HUNG UP HIS COWL--FOREVER!" (2)

MY NEWSPAPER HAD PROSPERED DURING MY ABSENCE, MAKING ME AN INCREDIBLY WEALTHY MAN, SO I DECIDED TO TRAVEL, TO FINALLY SEE THIS NEW WORLD...

IT'S NOT THE DYING ITSELF THAT BOTHERS ME, REALLY--IT'S THE INJUSTICE OF IT ALL!

WHEN LEE TRAVIS GOES TO HIS ETERNAL REWARD, THE WORLD WILL MOURN THE LOSS OF A GREAT NEWSPAPERMAN...

I WAS IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, WHEN I FOUND OUT I WAS DYING!

...BUT NO ONE WILL EVEN REMEMBER THE CRIMSON AVENGER!

IF ONLY I HAD A LITTLE MORE TIME-- TIME TO SOLVE ONE LAST BIG CASE OR... EH?

THAT TANKER MOVING DOWN THE RIVER-- IT KEEPS BLINKING ITS RUNNING LIGHTS-- AND THERE SEEMS TO BE A PATTERN!

THREE SHORT BLINKS... THREE LONG... THEN THREE SHORT AGAIN! IT'S AN SOS!

THERE'S SOMETHING TERRIBLY WRONG ON THAT SHIP--

--AND I KNOW JUST THE PERSON TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS!

OKAY, MR. TRAVIS, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR SLEEPING PILL--

--AND THEN IT'S TIME FOR LIGHTS OUT IN--

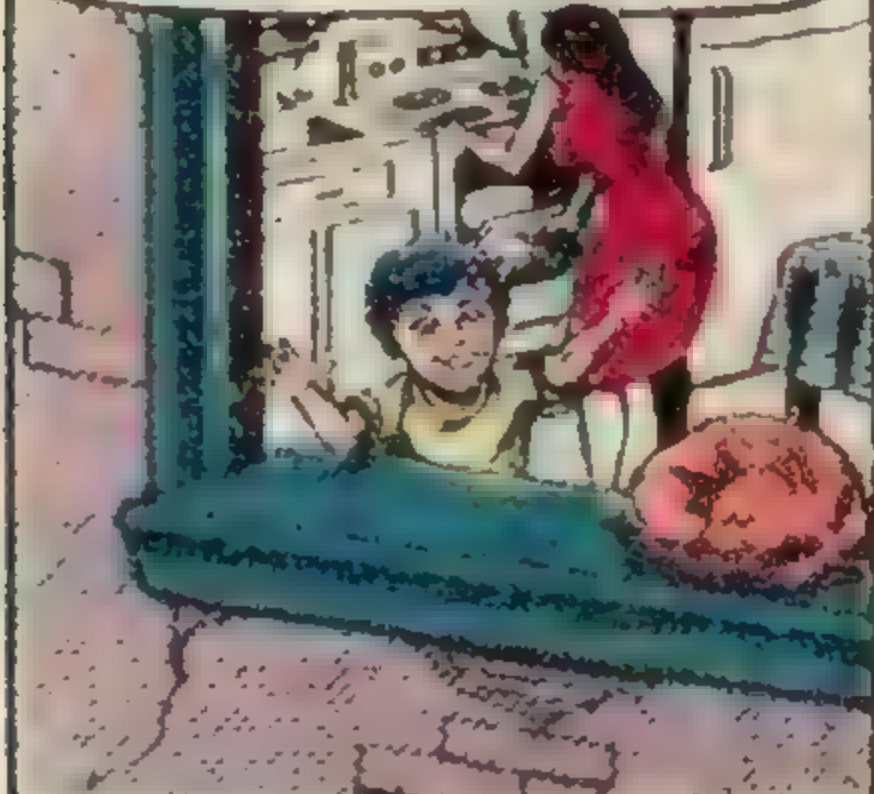
--HERE?

MR. TRAVIS? MR. TRAVIS?!

NOW WHERE IN HEAVEN IS THAT MAN?

CUT: TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CITY, WHERE IT IS ALWAYS GRAY, ALWAYS TWILIGHT-- AND THE SHADOWS NEVER SLEEP...

AYEEE, THE PRICE OF FOOD THESE DAYS, UMBERTO-- IT WILL DRIVE YOUR MOTHER TO THE POORHOUSE, NO?



UNO MOMENTO, UMBERTO-- AND WE WILL WASH YOU BEFORE--



UMBERTO-- NO!!

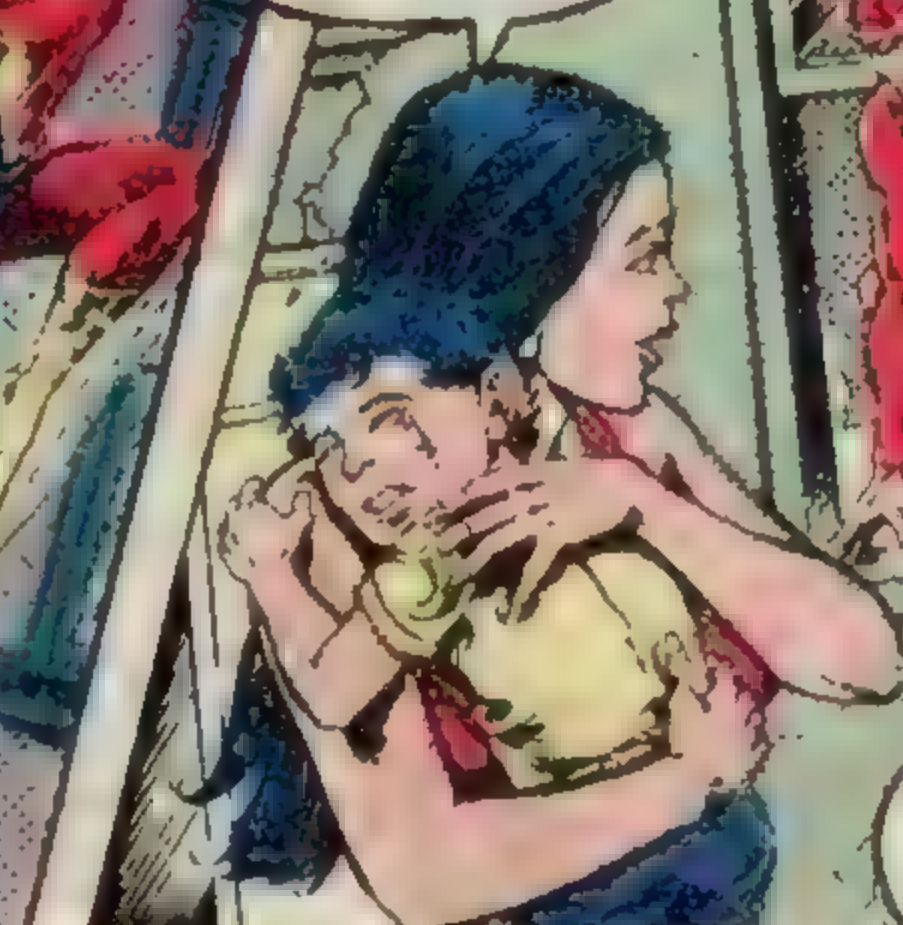


A SINGLE SOUL-CHILLING SCREAM, LIKE SO MANY OTHERS THAT SPLIT THE MUSTY AIR IN THIS PART OF THE CITY--

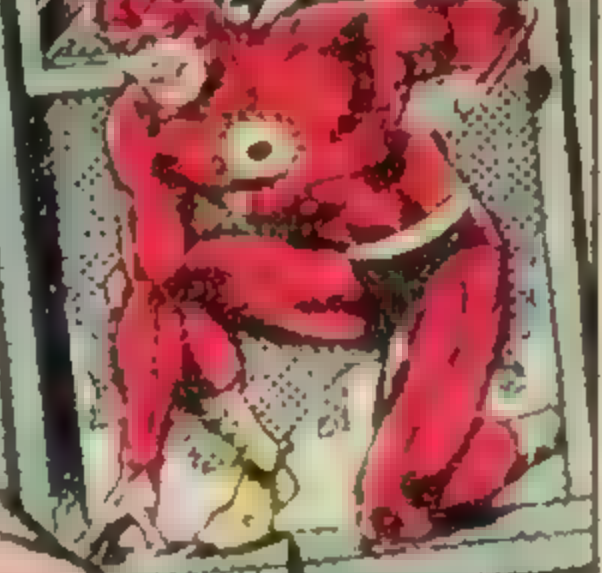


-- SAVE THAT THIS SCREAM IS HEARD-- AND ANSWERED!

UMBERTO-- NIÑO! OH, GRACIAS DIOS, SEÑOR! IS-- IS HE ALL RIGHT?



THE BOY IS FINE, SEÑORA-- BUT I'D KEEP A CLOSER EYE ON HIM IN THE FUTURE!



I WON'T ALWAYS BE HERE!

I WILL DO THAT, SEÑOR-- EVEN AS I WILL REMEMBER YOU IN MY PRAYERS TONIGHT!

BUT... HOW ARE YOU CALLED, SEÑOR?

A LONG TIME BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, THEY CALLED ME EL VENGADORE ROJO...

... THE CRIMSON AVENGER!

MINUTES LATER, AS A SLEEK
COMMUTER SHUTTLE-COPTER
GLIDES ACROSS THE CITY,
CARRYING AN UNSUSPECTED
HITCH-HIKER...

THE ANSWER TO THAT IS AS BAD AS CAN BE IMAGINED...

THERE-- THAT SHOULD
KEEP YOU FROM
TRYING ANY MORE
CUTE TRICKS,
CAPTAIN!

YOU'RE JUST LUCKY NOBODY SAW
YOU PLAYING WITH THOSE LIGHTS!

YEAH, ANYBODY
HASSLES US,
MAN--AN'
YOU'LL BE THE
FIRST ONE TO
DIE!

UH-OH! THAT
TANKER'S
LIGHTS HAVE
STOPPED
BLINKING!

WHAT IN
BLAZES
IS GOING
ON DOWN
THERE?

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHAT YOU THREE HOPE TO
GAIN FROM DOING THIS!

EASY, CAP--WE
HOPE TO GAIN A
FORTUNE!

THOSE
EXPERIMENTAL
CHEMICALS YOU
GOT STASHED
IN THE HOLD OF
THIS SHIP ARE
WORTH MILLIONS
TO THE RIGHT
BUYER!

BUT THOSE CHEMICALS
ARE UNSTABLE--
EXPLOSIVELY VOLATILE!
IF THEY'RE MISHANDLED,
THEY CAN TURN THIS
ENTIRE CITY INTO A
SMOKING CRATER--!

WE KNOW! THAT'S WHY THIS
TANKER WAS DESIGNED TO
CART 'EM WAY OUT INTO
THE ATLANTIC-- AND DEEP-
SIX 'EM SOMEWHERE SAFELY!

BUT WE GOT
US A BET-
TER USE
FOR THIS
STUFF--

--AND THERE AIN'T NOBODY
WHO'S GONNA STOP US FROM--

--HEY!!? WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO THE
LIGHTS?!

IF YOU'RE
PLAYING CUTE
AGAIN, CAPTAIN,
I'LL--

--HUH?!? NOW WHAT?

IT'S A FOG BLOWIN' IN--
SOME KIND'A CRAZY
RED FOG!

WHAT'S GOIN'
DOWN AROUND
HERE?

I HATE TO STATE
THE OBVIOUS, PUNK--

BUM-BO-BO-BO

WHA--?!

--BUT YOU
ARE!

WOW!

UUNFF!

LOUSY
SMOKE-- CAN'T SEE
A BLASTED THING!

BUT I KNOW YOU'RE
IN HERE SOMEPLACE,
MISTER-- AN' I'M
GONNA FIND YA!

WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING
TO BE *THAT* WAY ABOUT
IT--

--WHY DON'T I
JUST SAVE YOU
THE TROUBLE?

BWOK!

HHUUNNANNN!

YOUR TURN, PUNK!
CARE TO DO THIS THE
EASY WAY?

NOT A CHANCE,
MAN! I'LL BLOW
US ALL TO HADES
AND GONE BEFORE
I'LL GO BACK TO
THE PEN!

BOOM!

WAK!

WOW!

NNNUNFF!

LUNATIC!

THAT GRENADE--! HAVE TO
HIT THE DECK BEFORE--

AND, AS THE SMOKE FROM THE
EXPLOSION MINGLES WITH THE
CRIMSON AVENGER'S ONCE-
FAMOUS RED MIST...

WHAT IS IT, CAPTAIN? WHAT'S
WRONG?

THAT EXPLOSION--
IT STARTED A
RAGING FIRE
OUT ON THE
DECK!

YOU CAN
TAKE COMMAND OF YOUR SHIP
AGAIN, CAPTAIN! THOSE THREE
YOUNG PUNKS WON'T BE
BOTHERING ANYONE
FOR A WHILE!

MISTER,
I DON'T
KNOW HOW TO
THANK YOU
FOR--NO!

OH, DEAR
LORD--NO!

AND WHEN THOSE
FLAMES REACH THE
CHEMICALS IN THE HOLD,
THIS SHIP WILL GO UP
LIKE A HYDROGEN
BOMB!

BUT THERE MAY
STILL BE A WAY TO
SAVE THE CITY--
IF WE CAN GET
THE SHIP OUT OF
THE HARBOR
AND INTO OPEN
WATER BEFORE
IT BLOWS!

CAPTAIN, YOU'D BETTER TAKE THESE
PUNKS AND YOUR MEN--AND CAST OFF
IN ONE OF THE LIFEBOATS!

NO! THIS IS MY SHIP--
MY RESPONSIBILITY--!

IN PITY'S NAME, DON'T
WASTE TIME ARGUING
WITH ME, MAN! I'M
TAKING THIS SHIP--AND
THAT'S FINAL!

I HAVE A LOT LESS
TO LOSE THAN
YOU DO!

THEN GOODBYE, MISTER--
AND GOOD LUCK!

FOR ALL OUR
SAKES, I HOPE
TO GOD YOU
MAKE IT!

SO DO I,
FRIEND...
SO DO I!

THE SECONDS TICKING
AWAY IN HIS HEAD LIKE
THE FUSE ON A TIME-
BOMB, THE MIDNIGHT
MANSTALKER PUSHES
THE BLAZING SHIP
FORWARD--

--TREADING IT THROUGH THE NARROW
MOUTH OF THE HARBOR AS IF THROUGH
THE EYE OF A NEEDLE...

JUST A LITTLE BIT FURTHER--
AND THE CITY SHOULD
BE SAFE!

WELL, IT DOESN'T
MATTER REALLY--
MY HOURS WERE
NUMBERED
ANYWAY!

AT LEAST
THIS WAY
MY DEATH
WILL COUNT
FOR SOMETHING...

I'M JUST HAPPY I GOT
ONE LAST CHANCE TO
WEAR THIS
GOOD OLD
UNIFORM...

BUT THERE ISN'T A
PIPER'S CHANCE
OF ME GETTING OFF
THIS SHIP ALIVE!

...AT LEAST THIS
WAY, THE CRIMSON
AVENGER WILL BE
REMEMBERED!

FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN YEARS,
I FEEL TRULY
ALIVE--!

THE EXPLOSION OF THE
BLAZING TANKER IS
BLINDING, DEAFENING--
TURNING THE WATER TO
STEAM AND THE NIGHT
AIR TO OZONE FOR
HUNDREDS OF YARDS IN
EVERY DIRECTION--

ALL ALONG THE SHORELINE,
IN COUNTLESS BUILDINGS,
THE WINDOWS HUM AND
TREMBLE AND SHAKE...

...BUT NOT A SINGLE
ONE IS *BROKEN*!

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT,
CAPTAIN--BUT THIS CITY OWES
YOU ONE FOR GETTING THAT
SHIP OUT OF THE HARBOR
IN TIME!

YOU DON'T
OWE ME
ANYTHING,
OFFICER!

THERE WAS
SOMEONE AT THE
HELM OF MY SHIP
WHEN SHE BLEW...
THE BRAVEST MAN
I'VE EVER KNOWN!

WELL, WHO WAS HE?
THAT'S ONE GUY WHO
DESERVES A MEDAL!

I WISH I COULD TELL
YOU, PAL--BUT THE
SMOKE WAS TOO THICK
FOR ME TO SEE HIM
CLEARLY...

...AND HE NEVER
MENTIONED HIS
NAME!

AND THUS THE LEGEND OF THE
CRIMSON AVENGER DIES WITH HIM...

...OR DOES IT?

WHEN YOU ARE OLD
ENOUGH, UMBERTO, I
WILL TELL YOU HOW A
BRAVE MAN SAVED
YOUR LIFE TODAY...

...AND THEN
SOMEDAY YOU
WILL TELL YOUR
CHILDREN SO
THEY CAN
TELL THEIR
CHILDREN!

WE MUST
NEVER FORGET
EL VENGADORE
ROJO... THE
CRIMSON
AVENGER!

TALES OF GOTHAM CITY

THE VIOLIN OF RUDOLF YANOK HAS PLAYED A GOLDEN SONG IN THE WORLD'S CONCERT HALLS... THEN WHY IS HE PLAYING IN GOTHAM'S STREETS, SETTLING FOR MERE COPPERS?

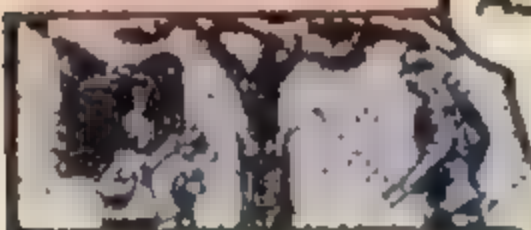


PERHAPS, LIKE THE STREET MUSICIAN, HE'S SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING HE HAS LOST... PERHAPS HE'S CAUGHT UP IN...

The Pursuit of JOY

WRITER
MIKE W. BARR
ARTIST
DAN SPIEGLE
LETTERER
BEN ODA
COLORIST
TOM ZILKO
EDITOR
DICK GIORDANO

IT BEGAN
HOURS
EARLIER AS...



SUCH A GLORIOUS
CITY, THIS GOTHAM...
ALMOST AS BEAUTIFUL
AS MY NATIVE BUDAPEST...!
THANK YOU FOR THE
TOUR, DRIVER... I WOULD
RETURN TO THE CONCERT
HALL NOW, PLEASE!

WELDS COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY

YES, SIR,
MR. YANOK!



NO NEED TO
EXPLAIN, LESLIE!
IT'S OBVIOUS YOU'RE
ASHAMED OF
WHAT I DO!

WE'VE BEEN
THROUGH
THIS BEFORE,
FATHER...!



I'M NOT ASHAMED OF
YOU--BUT DON'T I
HAVE THE RIGHT TO
CHOOSE HOW I
SPEND MY LIFE?

BY THE WAY YOU LIVE,
LESLIE--WORKING IN A DINER,
PLAYING IN THE STREETS...!
IT'S NOT FOR YOU--NOT FOR
MY DAUGHTER!

LOOK AT THEM, FATHER--THEY'RE
SO... TIRED, SO BEATEN DOWN!
THERE'S NO JOY IN THEIR LIVES!

IF I CAN BRING EVEN A SMILE
TO ONE FACE, A LITTLE JOY TO
ONE LIFE-- BY PLAYING ON THE
STREETS NOW, OR IN A CONCERT
HALL SOMEDAY-- IT'LL
ALL BE WORTH
IT!



AND IF YOU CAN'T
UNDERSTAND THAT,
MAYBE I'M NOT
YOUR DAUGHTER--
NOT ANYMORE!

WHAM

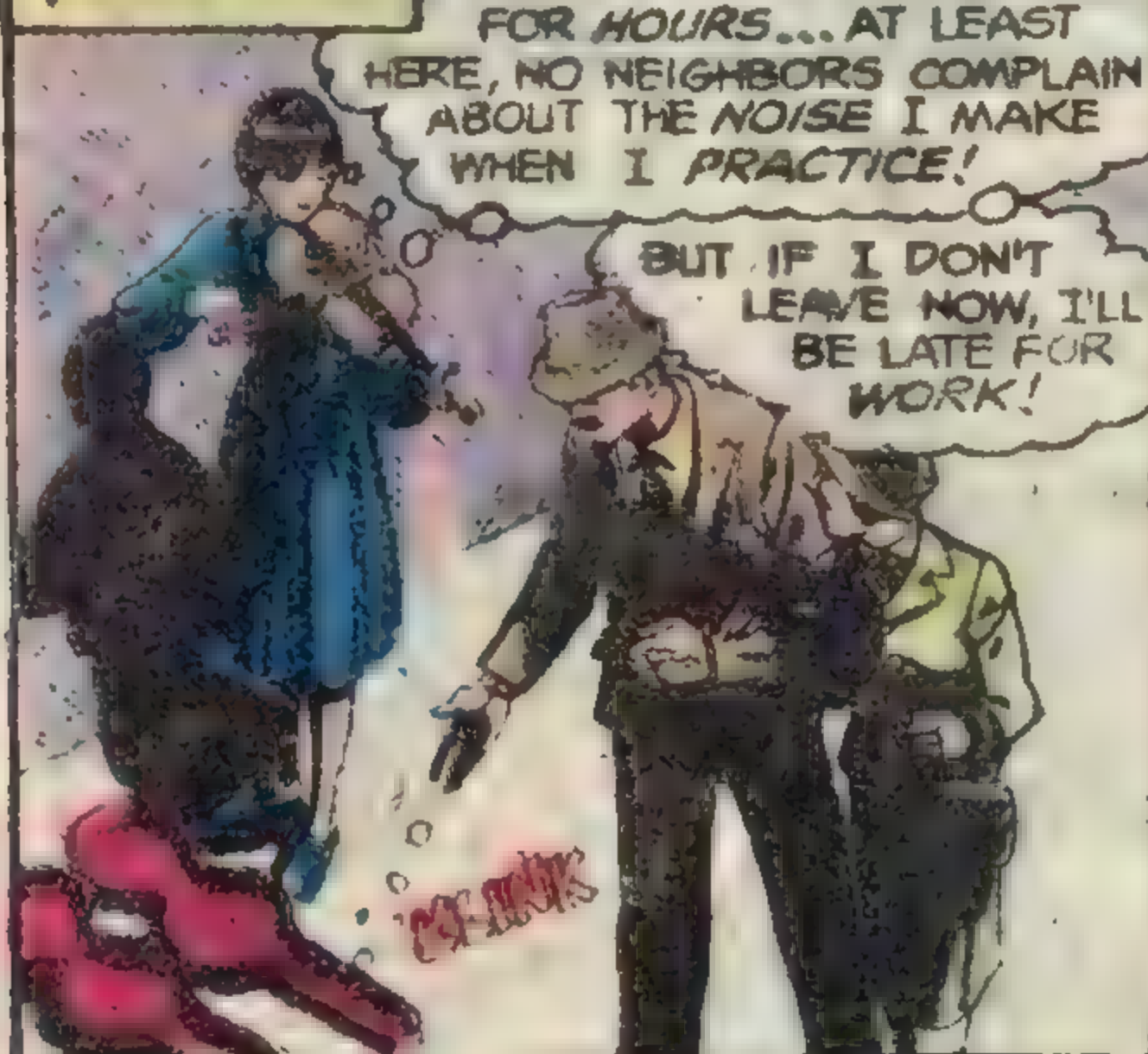
LESLIE--!



AND SOON...

I COULD PLAY LIKE THIS
FOR HOURS... AT LEAST
HERE, NO NEIGHBORS COMPLAIN
ABOUT THE NOISE I MAKE
WHEN I PRACTICE!

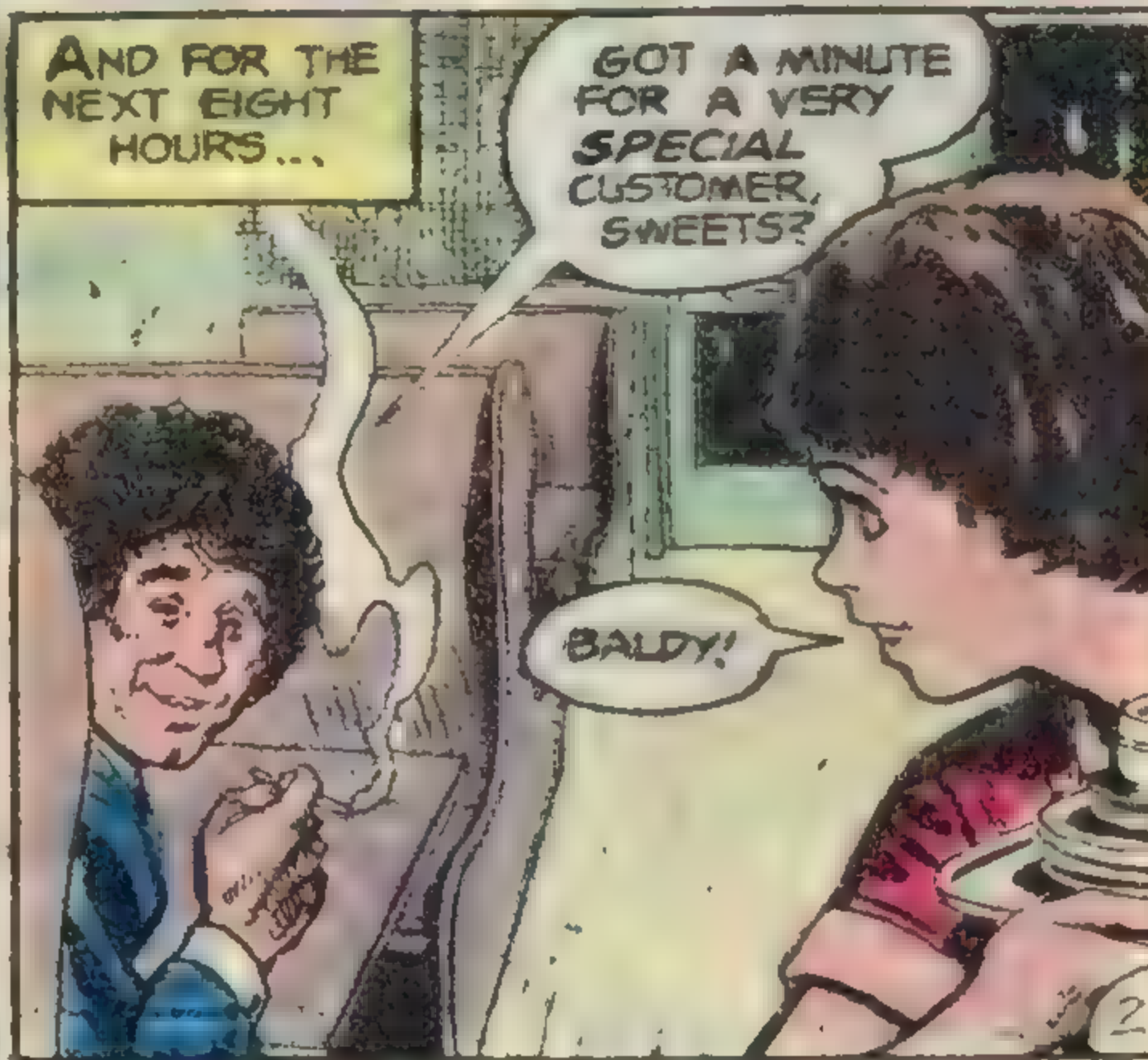
BUT IF I DON'T
LEAVE NOW, I'LL
BE LATE FOR
WORK!

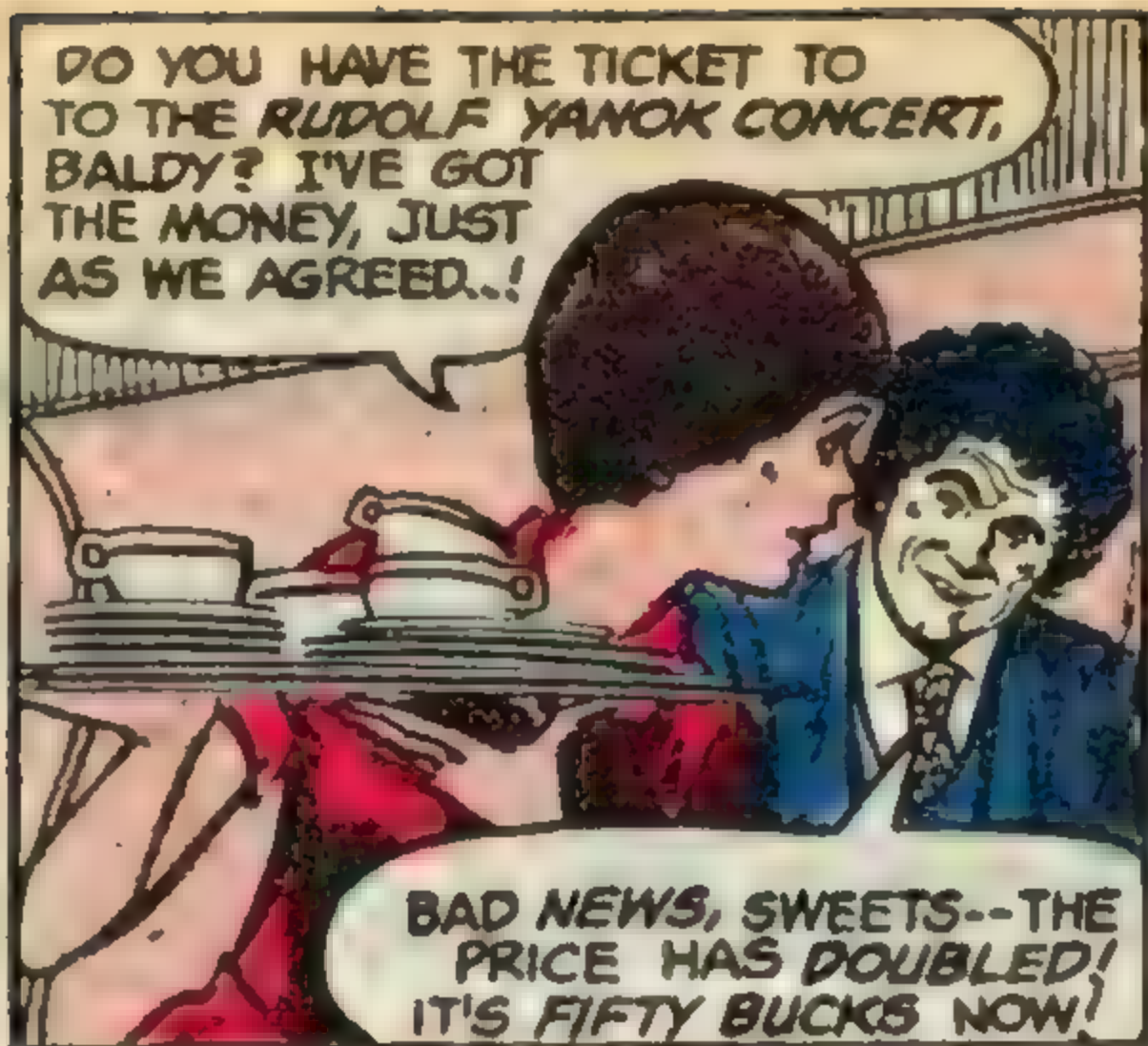


AND FOR THE
NEXT EIGHT
HOURS...

GOT A MINUTE
FOR A VERY
SPECIAL
CUSTOMER,
SWEETS?

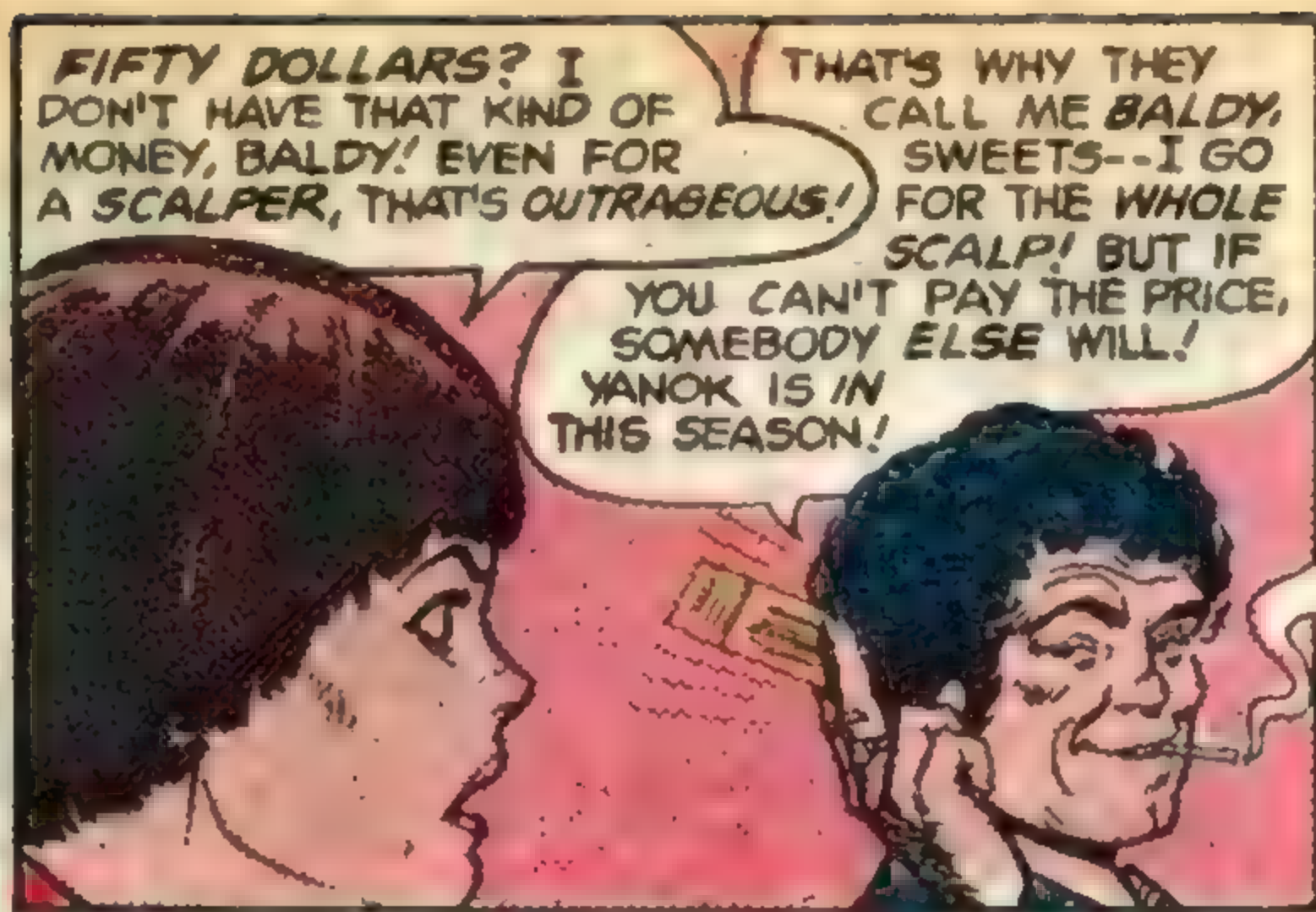
BALDY!





DO YOU HAVE THE TICKET TO
TO THE RUDOLF YANOK CONCERT,
BALDY? I'VE GOT
THE MONEY, JUST
AS WE AGREED..!

BAD NEWS, SWEETS--THE
PRICE HAS DOUBLED!
IT'S FIFTY BUCKS NOW!



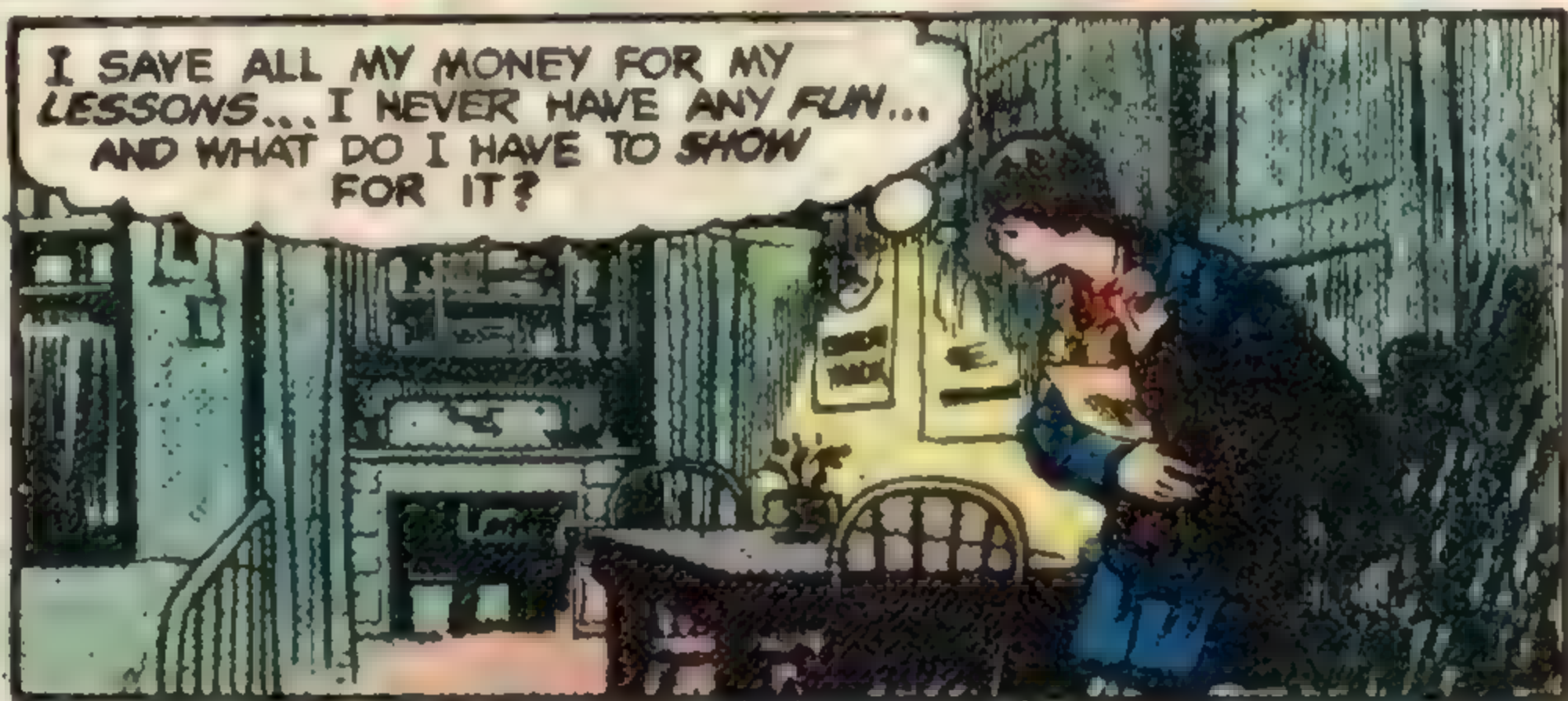
FIFTY DOLLARS? I
DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF
MONEY, BALDY! EVEN FOR
A SCALPER, THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS!

THAT'S WHY THEY
CALL ME BALDY,
SWEETS--I GO
FOR THE WHOLE
SCALP! BUT IF

YOU CAN'T PAY THE PRICE,
SOMEBODY ELSE WILL!
YANOK IS IN
THIS SEASON!

THE REST OF LESLIE'S
SHIFT PASSES IN A
BLUR... BUT WHEN IT IS
AT LAST OVER...

IT'S NOT FAIR... I
WAS LOOKING FORWARD
TO THAT CONCERT
FOR WEEKS...!

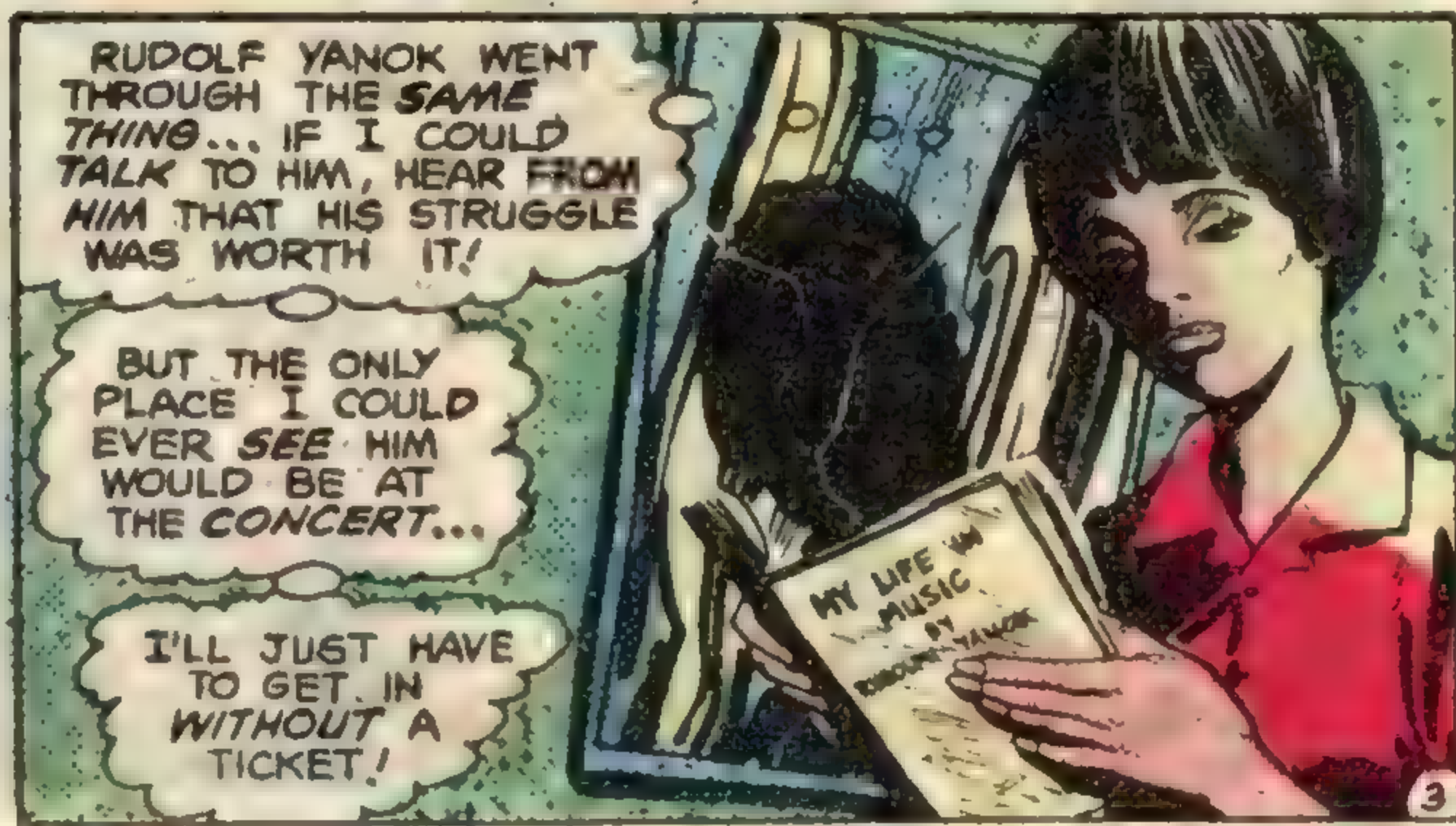


I SAVE ALL MY MONEY FOR MY
LESSONS... I NEVER HAVE ANY FUN...
AND WHAT DO I HAVE TO SHOW
FOR IT?



IF I WENT INTO
FATHER'S BUSINESS,
I'D HAVE ANYTHING I
WANTED... EXCEPT MY
CAREER AS A VIOLINIST!

WHO AM I KIDDING?
WHAT "CAREER"?



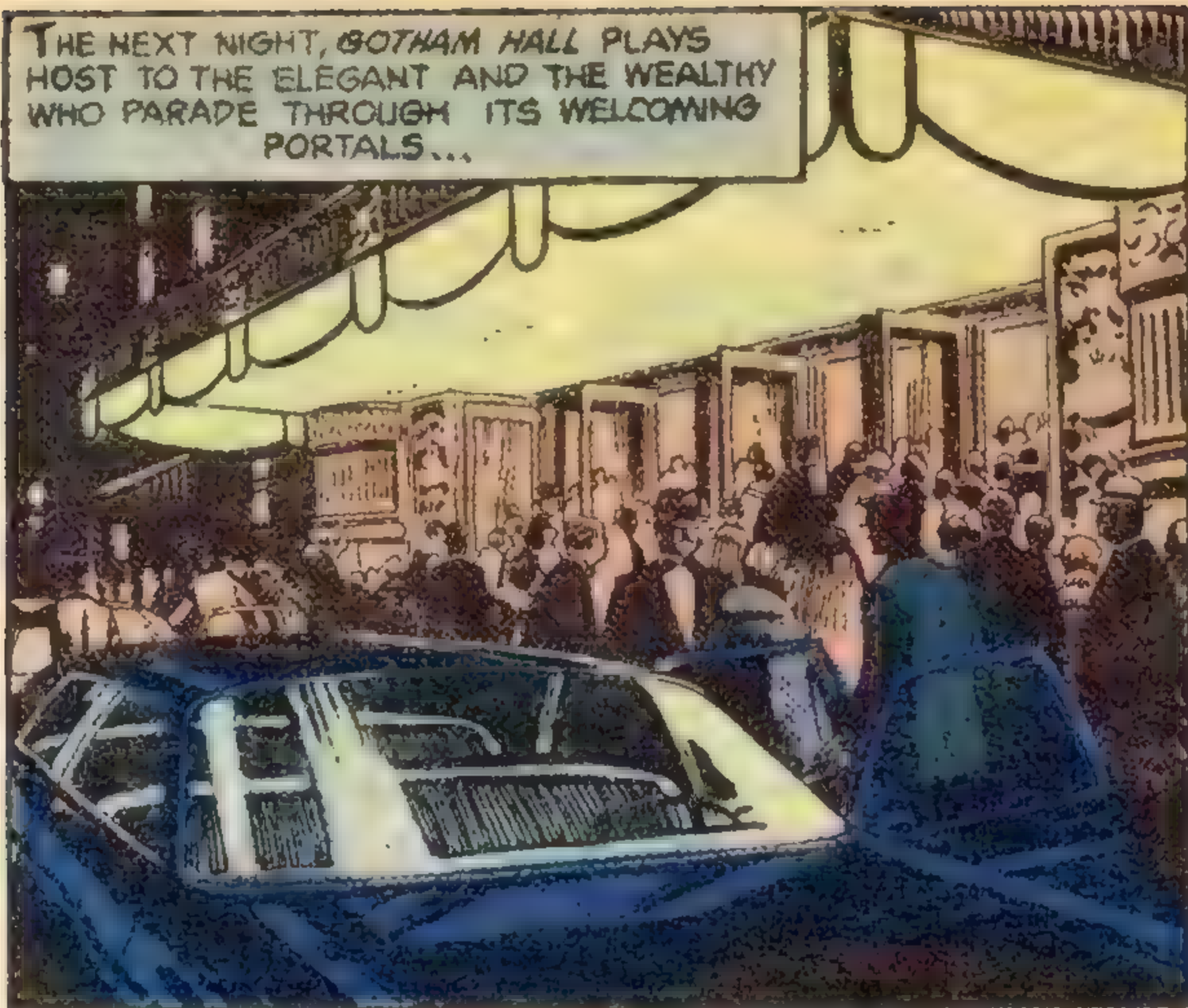
RUDOLF YANOK WENT
THROUGH THE SAME
THING... IF I COULD
TALK TO HIM, HEAR FROM
HIM THAT HIS STRUGGLE
WAS WORTH IT!

BUT THE ONLY
PLACE I COULD
EVER SEE HIM
WOULD BE AT
THE CONCERT...

I'LL JUST HAVE
TO GET IN
WITHOUT A
TICKET!

MY LIFE IN
MUSIC
BY RUDOLF YANOK

THE NEXT NIGHT, GOTHAM HALL PLAYS
HOST TO THE ELEGANT AND THE WEALTHY
WHO PARADE THROUGH ITS WELCOMING
PORTALS...



... WHILE SOME WHO ENTER
ARE LESS WELCOME-- BUT
FAR MORE PERSISTENT!

OKAY, OKAY-- I'M COMING!
KEEP IT DOWN,
HUH?



THANKS,
KEITH--
THIS IS
REALLY
GREAT
OF YOU!

I'M RISKING MY JOB
DOING THIS, LESLIE...
BUT A MAN'S GOT TO
HAVE A SENSE OF
PRIORITIES!

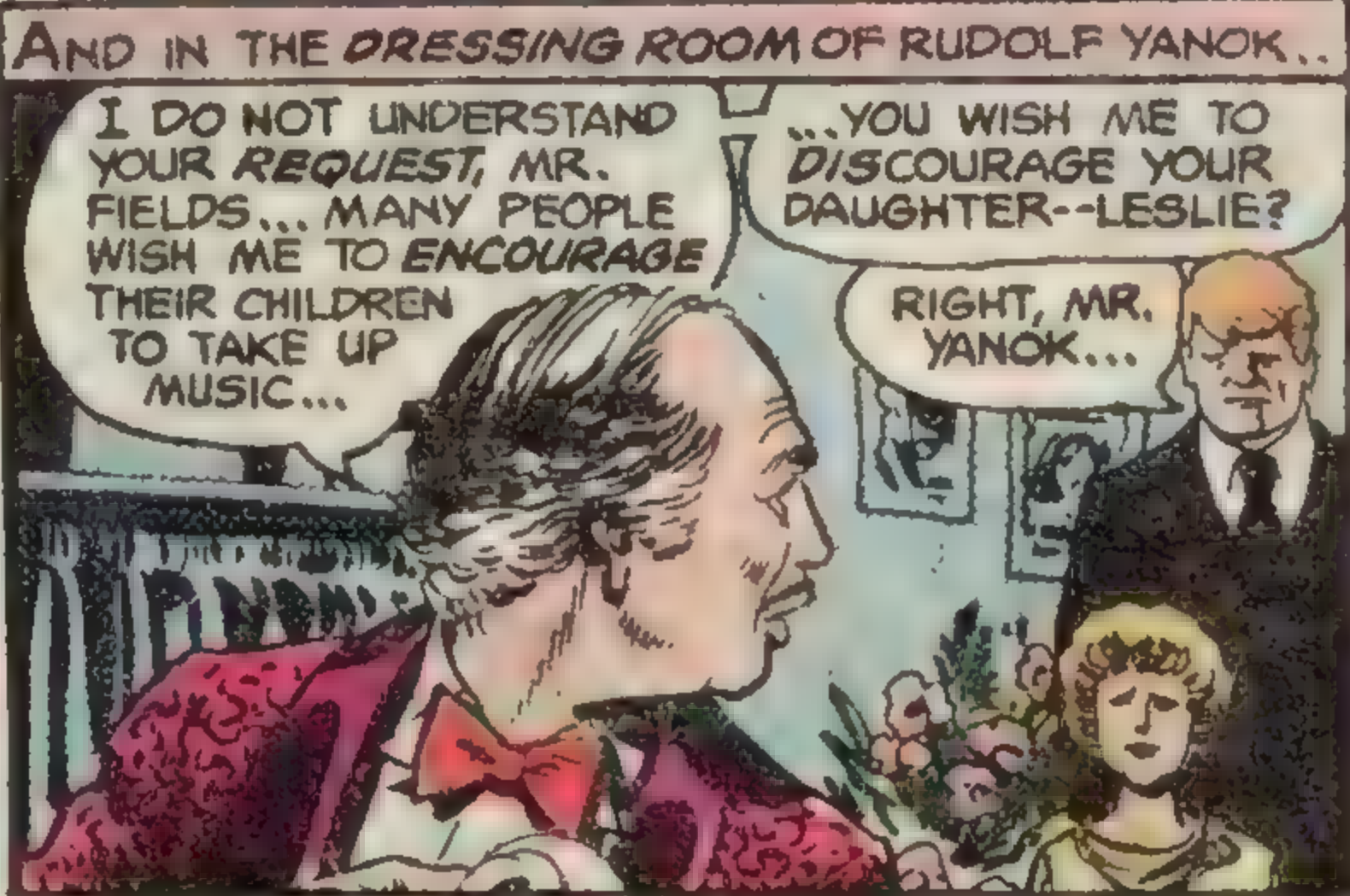


AND IN THE DRESSING ROOM OF RUDOLF YANOK..

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND
YOUR REQUEST, MR.
FIELDS... MANY PEOPLE
WISH ME TO ENCOURAGE
THEIR CHILDREN
TO TAKE UP
MUSIC...

... YOU WISH ME TO
DISCOURAGE YOUR
DAUGHTER-- LESLIE?

RIGHT, MR.
YANOK...



... A LIFE OF
MUSIC IS FINE
FOR SOMEONE
LIKE YOU-- BUT
OUR LESLIE
IS JUST AN
ORDINARY
GIRL!

AND YOU THINK
I AM SOMEHOW
UNUSUAL... SPECIAL
... BECAUSE I HAVE
DEVOTED MY LIFE
TO THE VIOLIN?

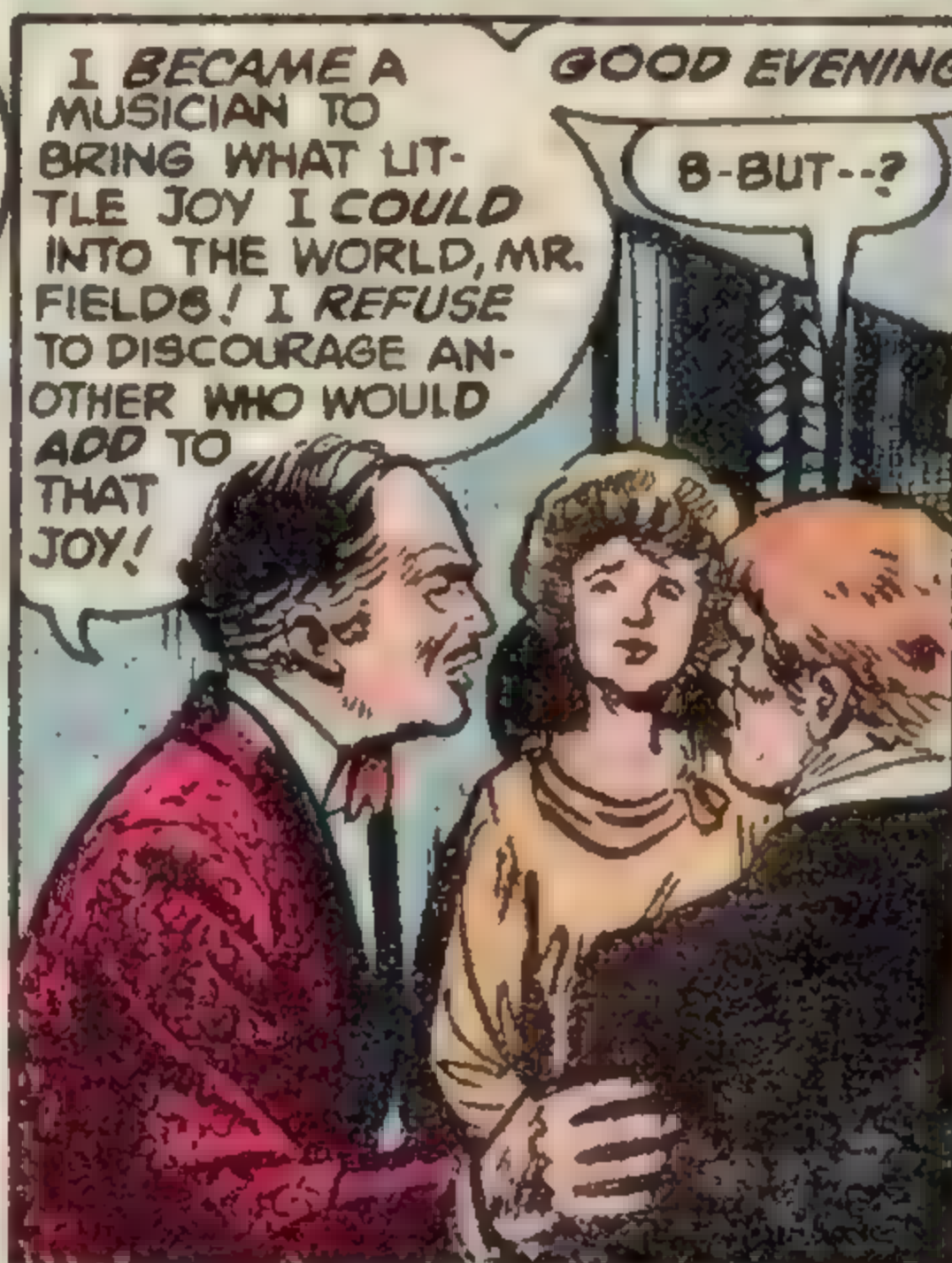
NO!



I BECAME A
MUSICIAN TO
BRING WHAT LIT-
TLE JOY I COULD
INTO THE WORLD, MR.
FIELDS! I REFUSE
TO DISCOURAGE AN-
OTHER WHO WOULD
ADD TO
THAT
JOY!

GOOD EVENING!

B-BUT--?



MINUTES LATER,
THE FLAWLESS
ACOUSTICS OF
GOTHAM HALL
ECHO THUNDER-
OUS APPLAUSE...
AS VIRTUOSO
RUDOLF YANOK
TAKES CENTER
STAGE!



HE WAITS UNTIL THE SILENCE HAS BECOME ABSOLUTE, AND THEN HE PLAYS, NARROWED EYES SCANNING THE AUDIENCE AS THE MUSIC FILLS THE AIR...



ON ONE FACE, NEARLY HIDING IN THE WINGS, HE SEES THE THRILL, THE JOY, THEN HE SEES THE REST OF HIS AUDIENCE...



...AND THE MUSIC ABRUPTLY ENDS!



YOU DID NOT COME TO HEAR MY MUSIC... NOR TO FEEL THE JOY!

YOU CAME ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS EXPECTED OF YOU... BECAUSE IT WAS "FASHIONABLE"!

ONLY ONE HERE TONIGHT APPRECIATED MY MUSIC...



WHERE IS SHE? WHERE IS THE GIRL?

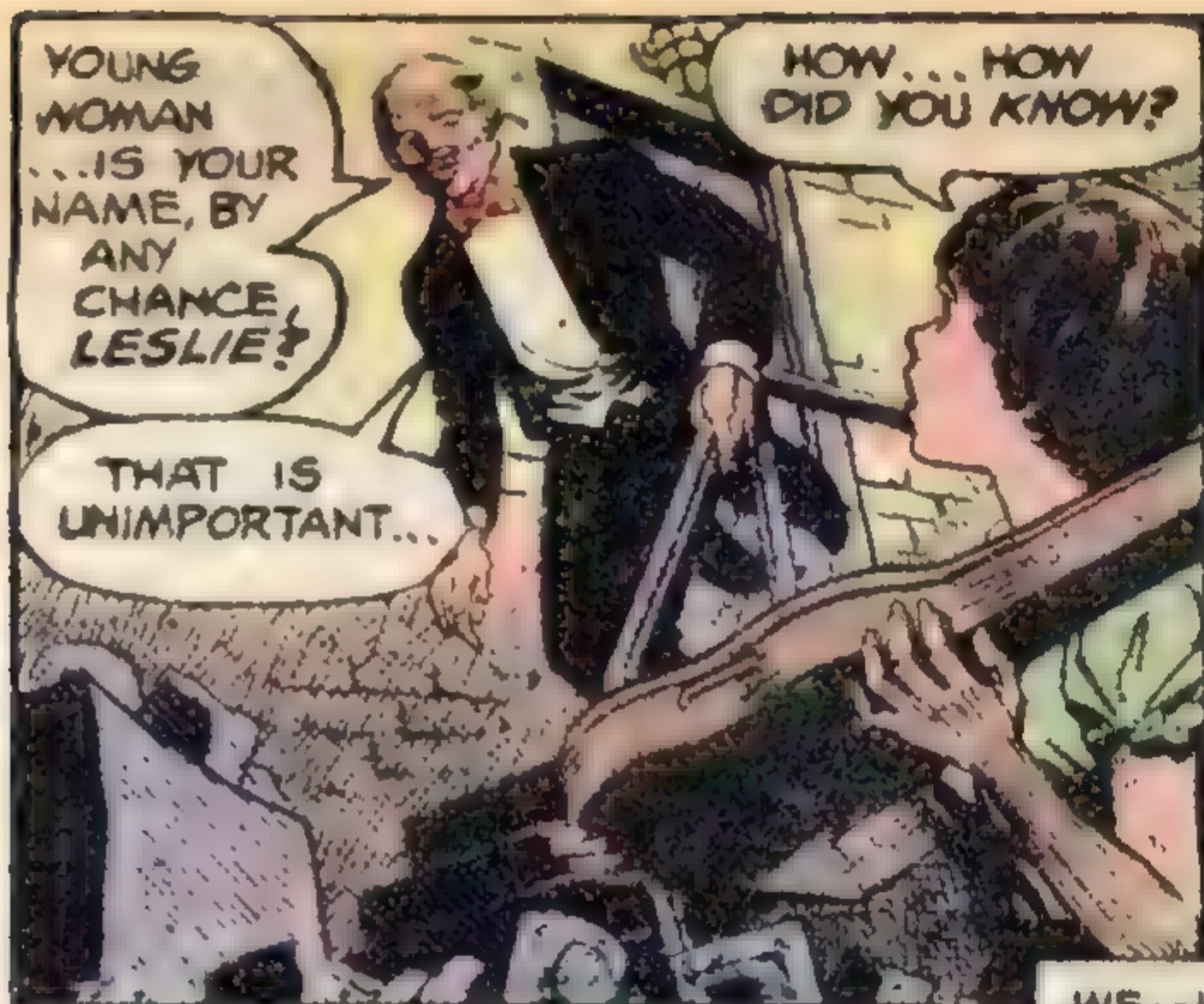
SHE--SHE RAN OUT, MR. YANOK... WHEN YOU STOPPED PLAYING! I--I THINK SHE WAS CRYING!



I NEVER THOUGHT IT COULD HAPPEN TO HIM... BUT IT DID!

IF RUDOLF YANOK CAN BECOME JADED, TIRED OF HIS ART, THEN WHAT HOPE IS THERE FOR ME? WHY DECEIVE MYSELF? IT'S BETTER TO--

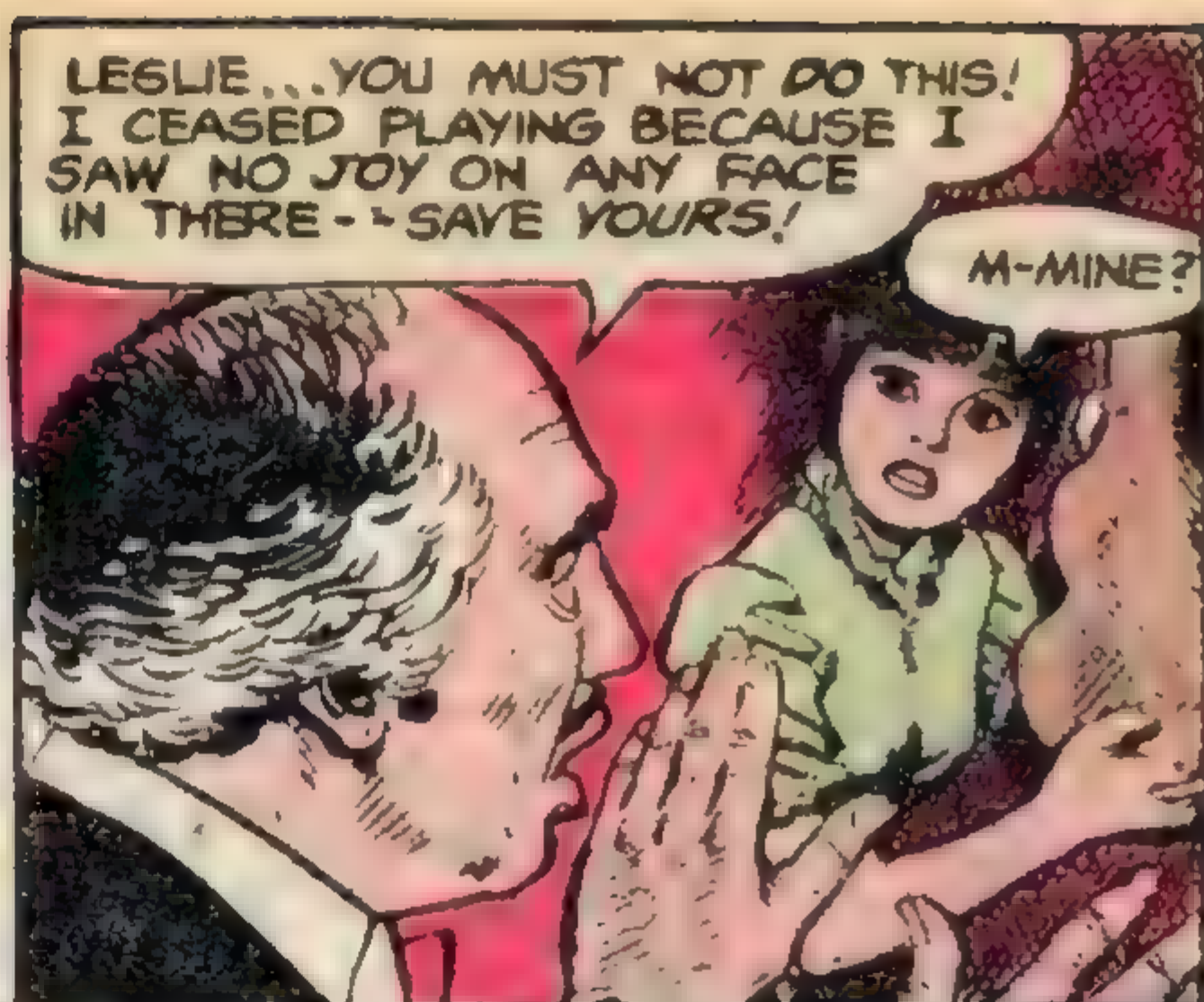




YOUNG WOMAN... IS YOUR NAME, BY ANY CHANCE, LESLIE?

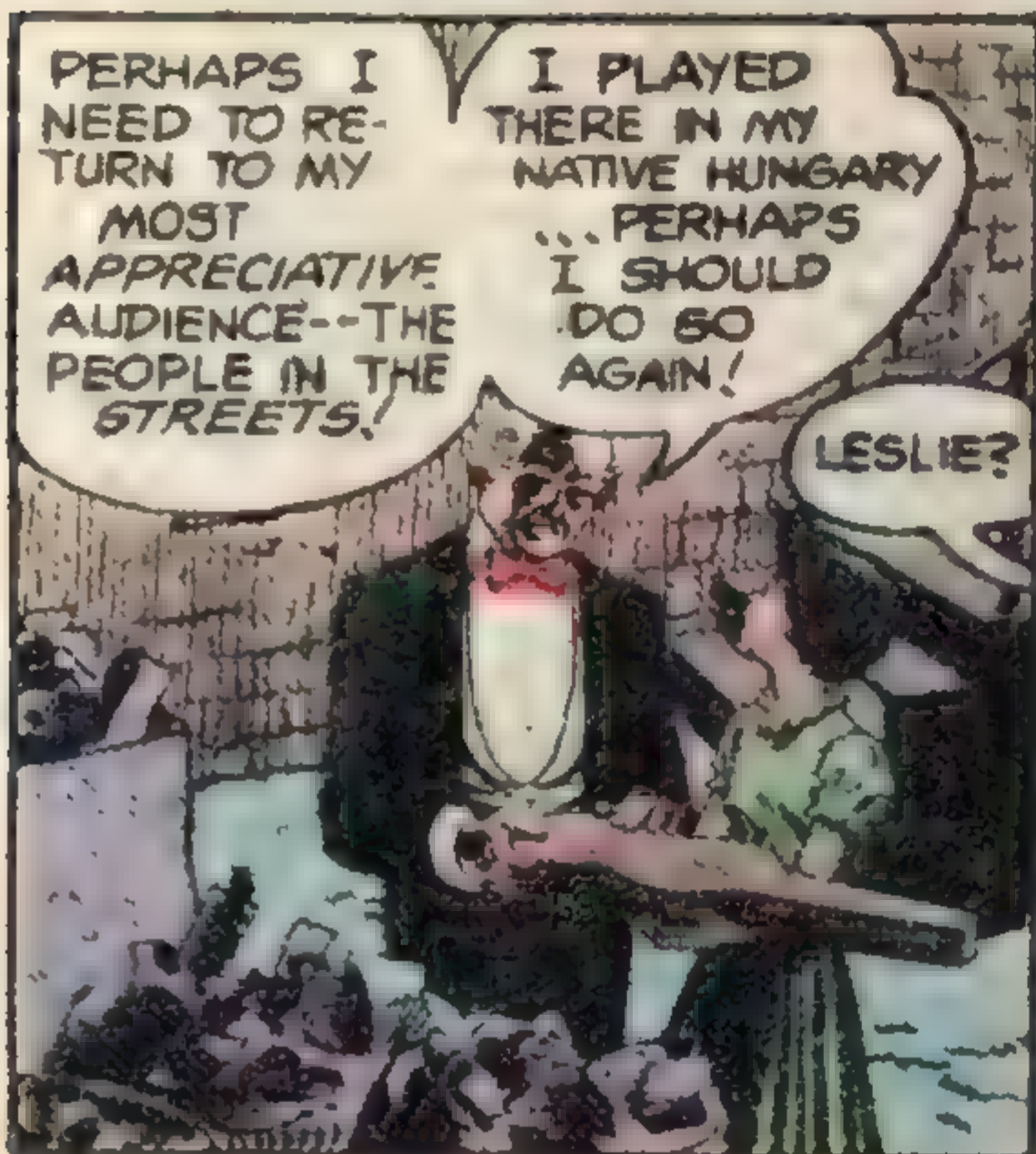
THAT IS UNIMPORTANT...

HOW... HOW DID YOU KNOW?



LESLIE... YOU MUST NOT DO THIS! I CEASED PLAYING BECAUSE I SAW NO JOY ON ANY FACE IN THERE-- SAVE YOURS!

M-MINE?



PERHAPS I NEED TO RETURN TO MY MOST APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE-- THE PEOPLE IN THE STREETS!

I PLAYED THERE IN MY NATIVE HUNGARY... PERHAPS I SHOULD DO SO AGAIN!

LESLIE?

WE--WE FOLLOWED MR. YANOK OUT HERE TO TALK TO HIM AGAIN... LESLIE... FOR YEARS WE THOUGHT WE'D BE HAPPY IF YOU'D GIVE UP THE VIOLIN...

...BUT IF IT MEANS THAT MUCH TO BOTH MR. YANOK AND YOU... LESLIE, WE UNDERSTAND... AND

WE WANT YOU TO KEEP PLAYING!

THANK YOU... I LOVE YOU!



NO TEARS NOW, LESLIE-- WE HAVE A CONCERT TO PLAY! OUR AUDIENCE AWAITS!

YES, MAESTRO!

THIS WORLD-FAMOUS VIOLIN VIRTUOSO RUDOLF YANOK CAME TO PLAY BESIDE A COMMON STREET MUSICIAN...

...A TALE THAT COULD HAPPEN ONLY IN GOTHAM CITY... OR ANYWHERE WHERE HUMAN HEARTS ARE CONSTANTLY IN PURSUIT OF JOY!



THE END

ROCKETED AS A BABY FROM THE EXPLODING PLANET KRYPTON, KAL-EL GREW TO MANHOOD ON EARTH-- WHOSE YELLOW SUN AND LIGHTER GRAVITY GAVE HIM FANTASTIC SUPER-POWERS! IN THE CITY OF METROPOLIS, HE POSES AS MILD-MANNERED NEWSMAN CLARK KENT-- BUT BATTLES EVIL ALL OVER EARTH-- AND BEYOND--AS...

SUPERMAN
Created by
JERRY SIEGEL &
JOE SHUSTER

FORGET THE PHANTOM ZONE, KAL-EL OF KRYPTON! YOU WILL FIND NO REFUGE FOR YOUR DOOMED FEMALES HERE IN OUR REALM!

MAYBE I COULD SAVE THEM BOTH, SUPERMAN! BUT WHY SHOULD LEX LUTHOR LIFT A FINGER TO HELP HIS MOST HATED ENEMY?

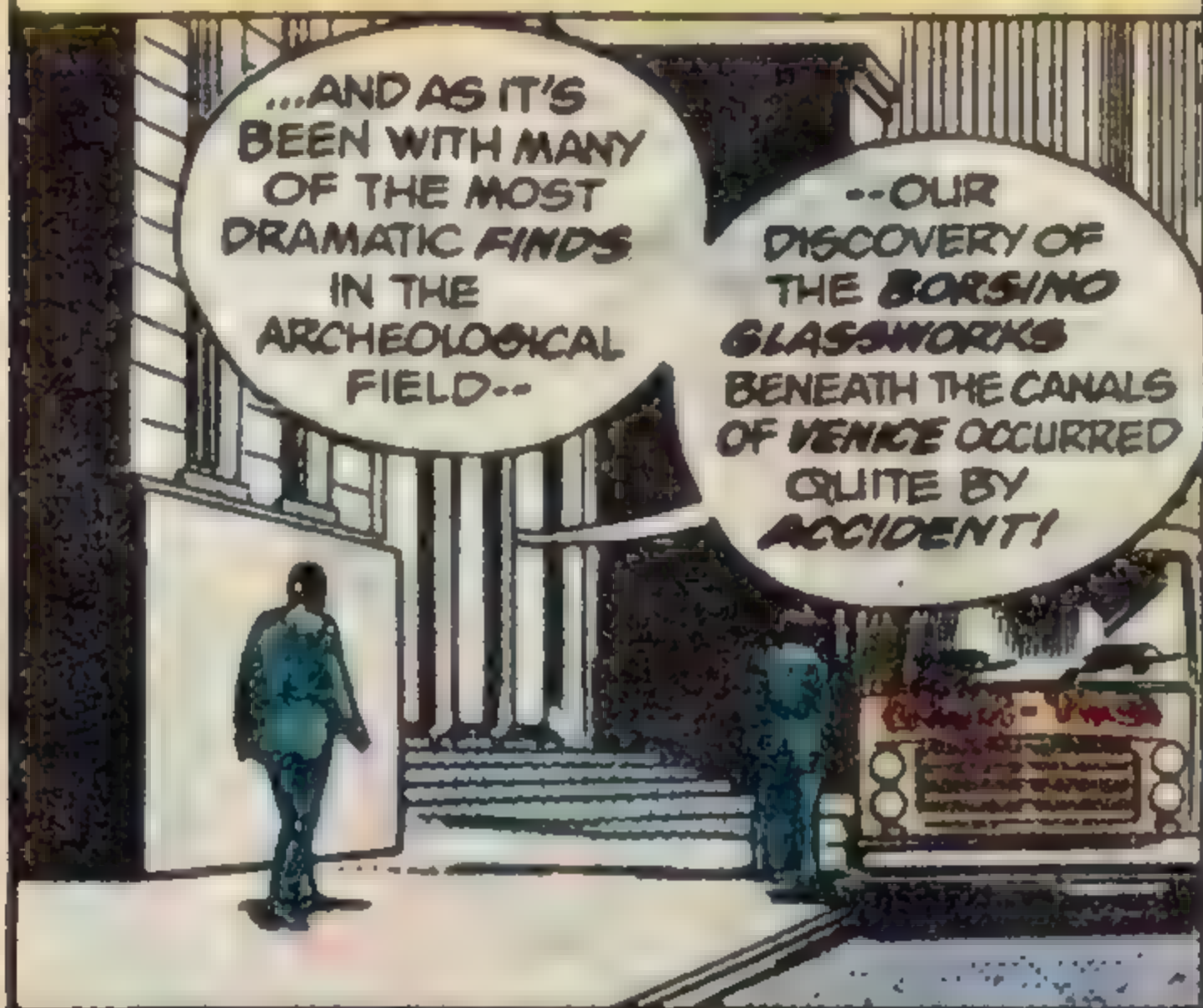
WE ARE TRULY SORRY, SUPERMAN! EVEN IF WE DID HAVE A CURE--WE WOULD BE FORBIDDEN TO GIVE IT TO YOU!

THE ALL-POWERFUL SUPERMAN! OVER THE YEARS HE HAS SAVED VAST CITIES... ENTIRE CIVILIZATIONS... WHOLE PLANETS! AND YET THE MAN OF STEEL NOW FINDS HIMSELF AGONIZINGLY HELPLESS-- ABOUT TO FACE THE MOST TRAGIC FAILURE OF HIS LIFE--

THE DYING DAY
of
LOIS & LANA!

WRITER: CARY BATES • PENCILLER: CURT SWAN • INKER: FRANK CHIARAMONTE
LETTERER: TODD KLEIN • COLORIST: G. D'ANGELO • EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

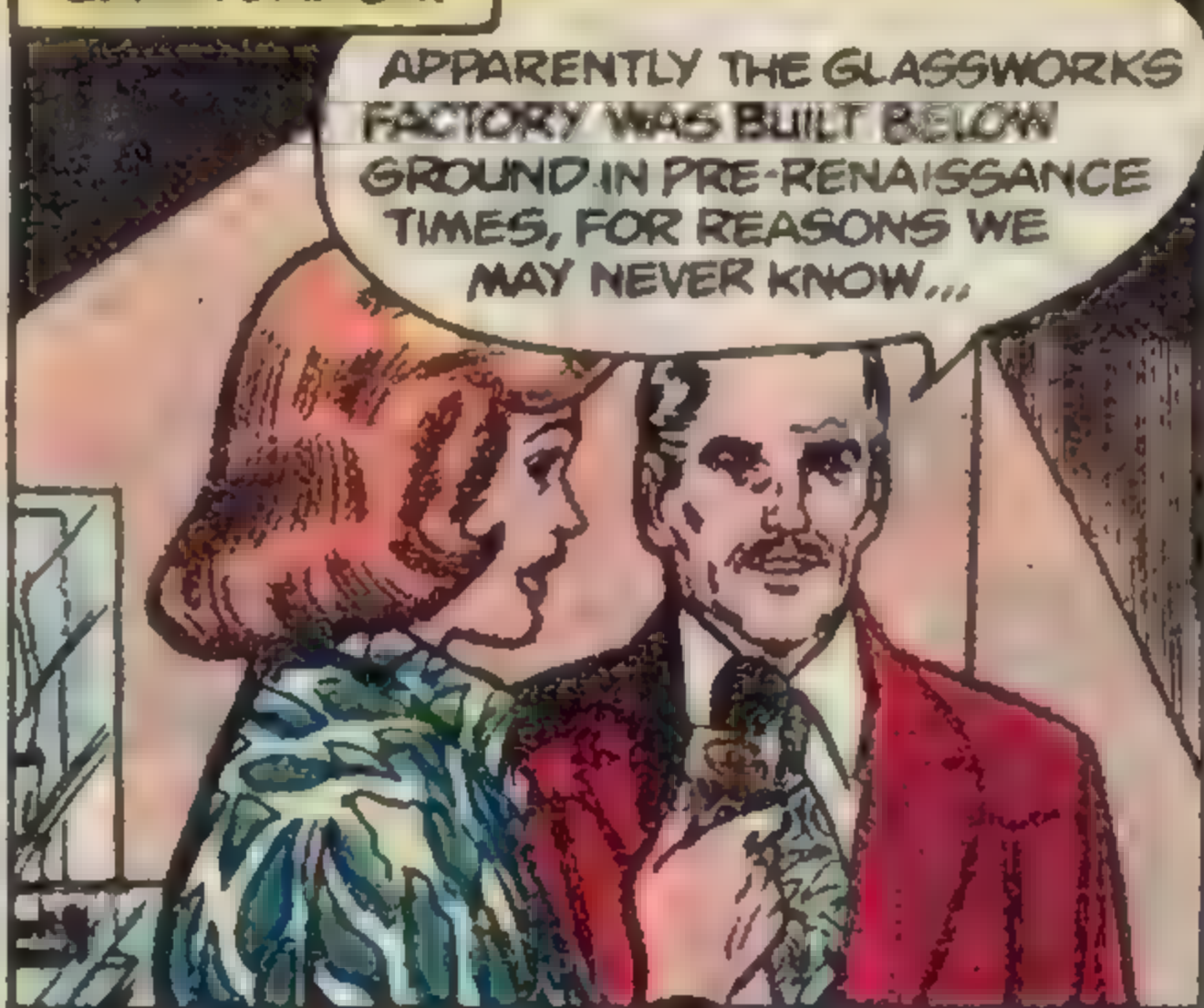
THE METROPOLIS MUSEUM -- WHERE THE WGBS-TV TRUCKS PARKED ON THE PREMISES PROVIDE A HINT OF THE TAPING SESSION ALREADY IN PROGRESS INSIDE...



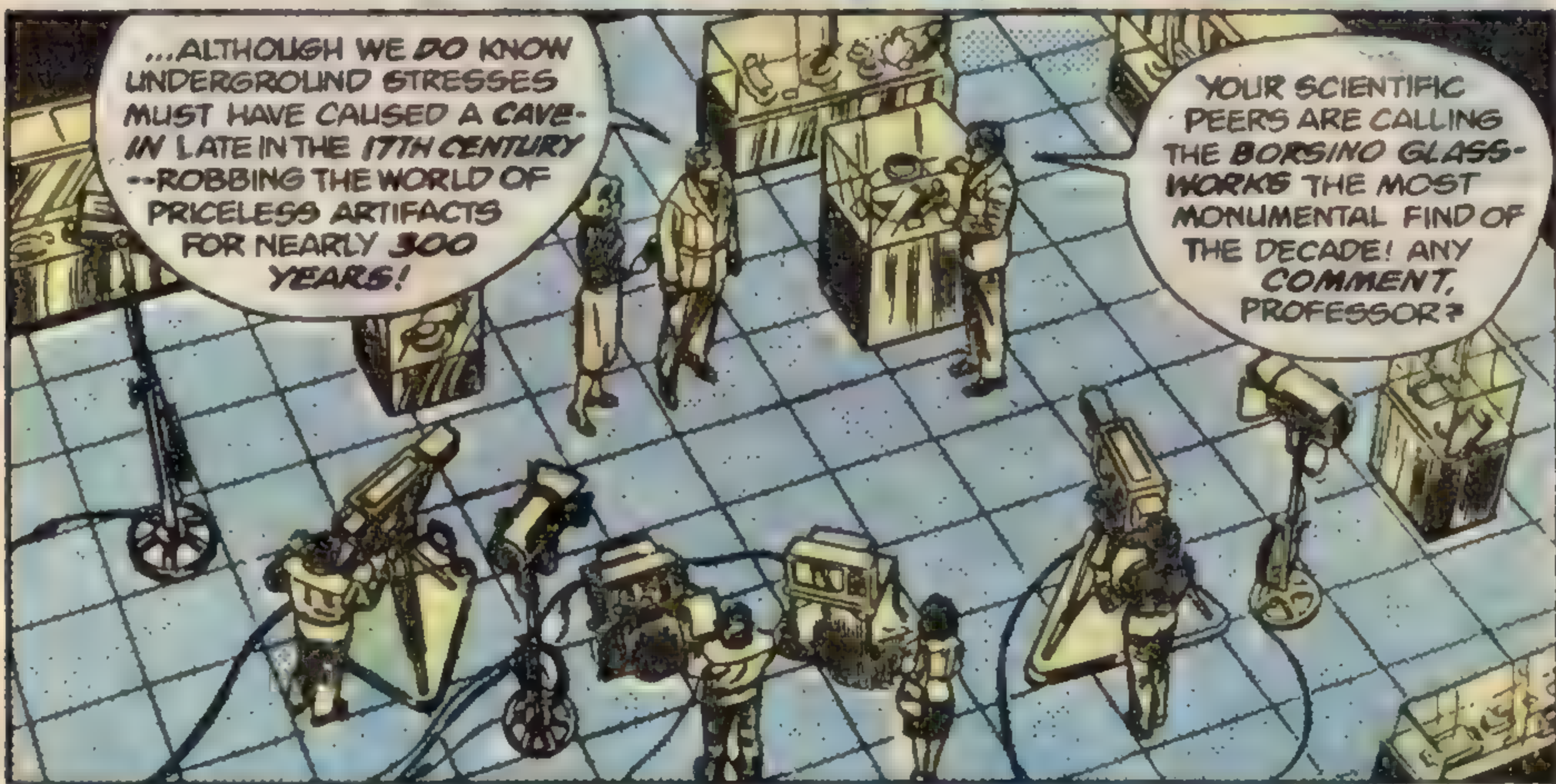
...AND AS IT'S BEEN WITH MANY OF THE MOST DRAMATIC FINDS IN THE ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD--

--OUR DISCOVERY OF THE BORSINO GLASSWORKS BENEATH THE CANALS OF VENICE OCCURRED QUITE BY ACCIDENT!

THE SUBJECT OF THIS SPECIAL WGBS-TV DOCUMENTARY, THE DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR LEWIS LANG--AT THE MOMENT BEING INTERVIEWED BY HIS DAUGHTER, GALAXY BROADCASTING'S OWN LANA LANG...



APPARENTLY THE GLASSWORKS FACTORY WAS BUILT BELOW GROUND IN PRE-RENAISSANCE TIMES, FOR REASONS WE MAY NEVER KNOW...



...ALTHOUGH WE DO KNOW UNDERGROUND STRESSES MUST HAVE CAUSED A CAVE-IN LATE IN THE 17TH CENTURY --ROBBING THE WORLD OF PRICELESS ARTIFACTS FOR NEARLY 300 YEARS!

YOUR SCIENTIFIC PEERS ARE CALLING THE BORSINO GLASSWORKS THE MOST MONUMENTAL FIND OF THE DECADE! ANY COMMENT, PROFESSOR?

ALSO ON HAND FOR THE TAPING--MISS LANG'S EQUALLY WELL-KNOWN CO-ANCHOR ON THE WGBS SIX O'CLOCK NEWS...

IT'S NOT FOR ME TO SPECULATE ON THE BORSINO TREASURE'S IMPORTANCE, MR. KENT! ONLY POSTERITY WILL PASS THAT JUDGMENT!

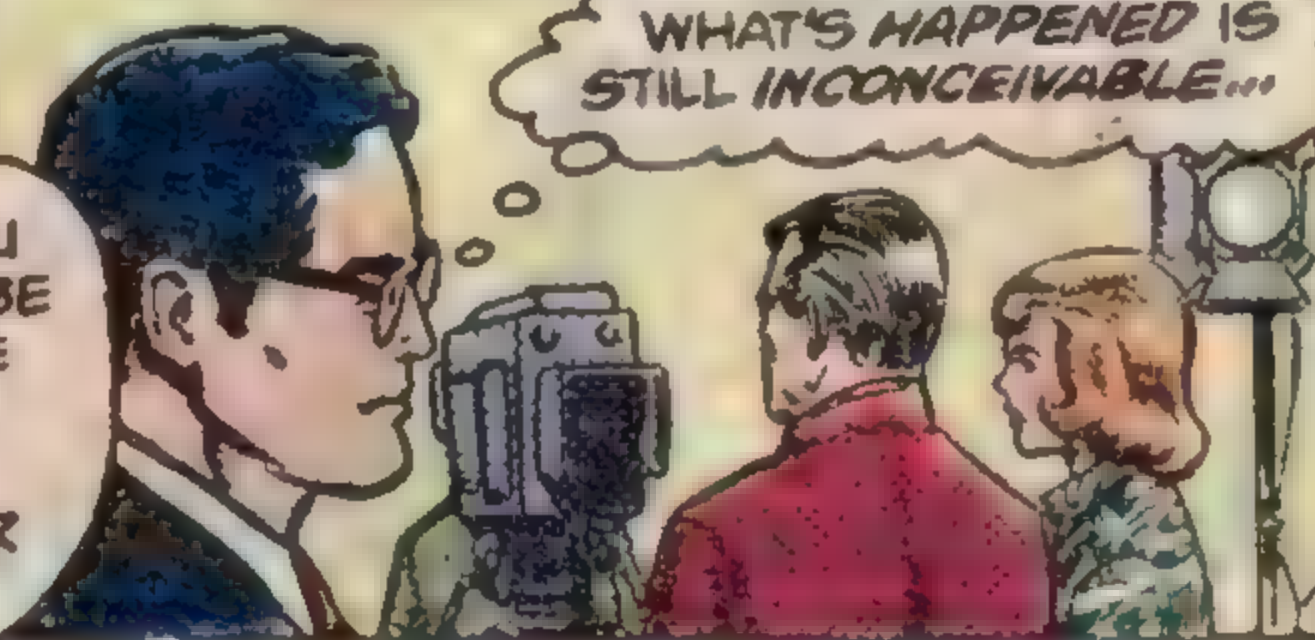


PERHAPS YOU COULD DESCRIBE SOME OF THESE BREATHTAKING ARTIFACTS IN DETAIL FOR OUR VIEWERS...

AND ALTHOUGH NO HINT OF IT IS EXPRESSED IN CLARK KENT'S PROFESSIONAL ON-AIR DEMEANOR --HE IS NEVERTHELESS GRAVELY TROUBLED...

I NEVER WOULD'VE THOUGHT KEEPING MY COMPOSURE ON THE AIR WOULD TURN OUT TO BE ONE OF THE TOUGHEST SUPER-FEATS I EVER DID!

THE HORROR OF WHAT'S HAPPENED IS STILL INCONCEIVABLE...



"...AND YET SO AGONIZINGLY REAL! I KNOW--BECAUSE I WAS ON THE SCENE WHEN THE TERRIBLE TRAGEDY TOOK PLACE HERE LESS THAN EIGHT HOURS AGO..."

GOOD GOSH! FATHER WILL HAVE ME STUFFED AND MOUNTED! I HAD NO BUSINESS HANDLING ONE OF HIS PRICELESS FINDS!

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, LANA!

"...AN ACCIDENT, YES..."

"...BUT NEITHER LANA NOR LOIS COULD HAVE POSSIBLY DREAMT OF THE INSTANTANEOUS DIRE EFFECTS OF HER FATEFUL BLUNDER...AS AN X-RAY SCAN REVEALED..."

GREAT SCOTT! THAT VIAL CONTAINED ASTOUNDINGLY POTENT MICROBES SEVERAL CENTURIES OLD--

--SO VIRULENT THEY WERE EVEN ABLE TO SEEP THROUGH MY KRYPTONIAN SKIN, AS WELL AS LOIS' AND LANA'S EARTHLY EPIDERMIS!

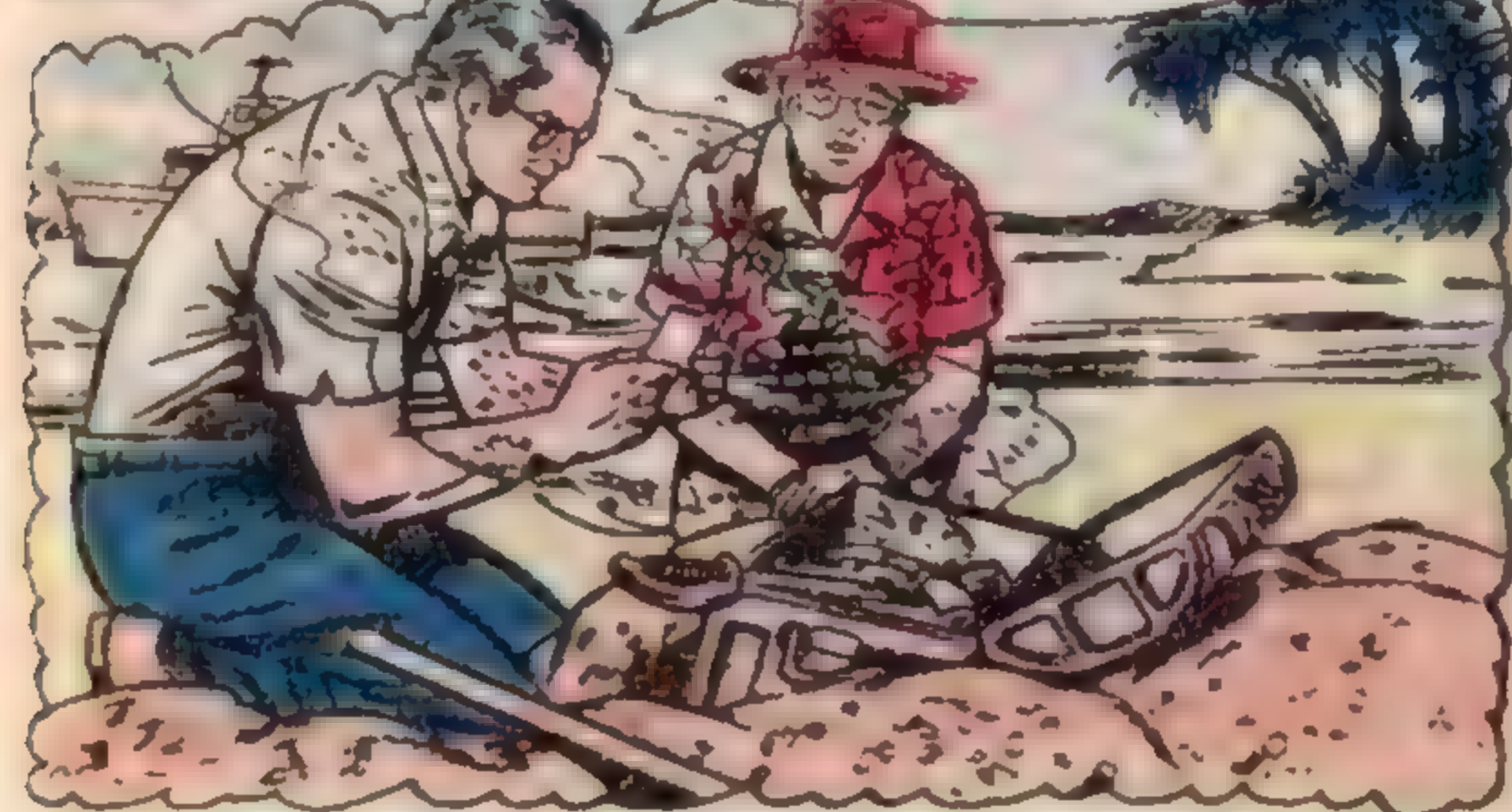
"ALTHOUGH THE LETHAL MICRO-ORGANISMS WERE SWIFTLY NEUTRALIZED BY THE SUPER-ANTIBODIES IN MY KRYPTONIAN BLOODSTREAM..."

"...IT WAS LITTLE CONSOLATION ONCE I REALIZED WHY THE MICROSCOPIC BREED LOOKED ALARMINGLY FAMILIAR!"

"THIS WAS NOT MY FIRST CONTACT WITH THEM! IDENTICAL MICROBES HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST DREADFUL TRAGEDY OF MY LIFE--"

"...THE TRAGIC LOSS OF MY BELOVED ADOPTIVE PARENTS, JONATHAN AND MARTHA KENT! NONE OF US HAD ANY INKLING THAT THE CARIBBEAN VACATION I HAD PROMISED THEM WOULD LEAD TO THEIR DOOM!"

"THEY TOO WERE TOTALLY UNWARE OF THE LETHAL MOMENT WHEN THE INVISIBLE MICRO-KILLERS INFECTED THEM BOTH..."



WHAT AN INCREDIBLE FIND, MARTHA! IMAGINE--WHILE DIGGING UP SHELLS FOR MY COLLECTION, I CAME ACROSS THIS OLD CHEST! NOTHING IN IT BUT PISTOLS, A CUTLASS, AND A TORN PIECE OF PARCHMENT!

"I LATER FOUND OUT THE 18TH-CENTURY PIRATE WHO BURIED THE CHEST WAS HIMSELF FATALLY INFECTED--JOINING THE HUNDREDS OF OTHER UNFORTUNATES WHO BECAME VICTIMS OF THE DREAD 'FEVER PLAGUE'..."



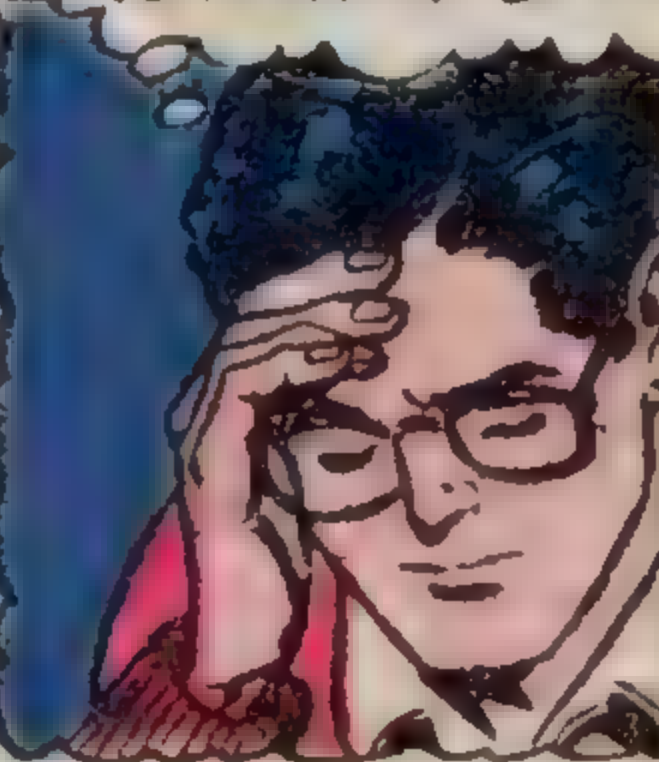
"...AN EPIDEMIC ALWAYS CONSIDERED INCURABLE!"

"AND EVEN THOUGH MODERN MEDICINE WAS STILL POWERLESS TO DEVISE A CURE--I WAS BRASHLY CONFIDENT THAT SUPERBOY'S VAST POWERS COULD SAVE THEM BOTH!"



"BUT I SOON DISCOVERED A GREATER POWER, FAR BEYOND MY CAPABILITIES, HAD DECREED OTHERWISE!"

~~I chose~~ I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING I COULD THINK OF...FROM SEEKING OUT RARE HERBAL CURES IN EXOTIC JUNGLES...TO GIVING MA AND PA A SUPER-TRANSFUSION OF MY KRYPTONIAN BLOOD!



"I FINALLY HAD TO FACE THE TRUTH--A HEART-SHATTERING DOUBLE TRAGEDY WAS UNFOLDING BEFORE MY EYES..."

"...A TRAGEDY EVEN A SUPERBOY WAS UTTERLY HELPLESS TO PREVENT! A TRAGEDY I HAD TO ENDURE IN PUBLIC..."



"...AND ONE THAT WOULD ALWAYS TORTURE ME IN PRIVATE FROM THAT DAY FORWARD--"

"--A SECRET BLIGHT I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FREE FROM MY CONSCIENCE..."

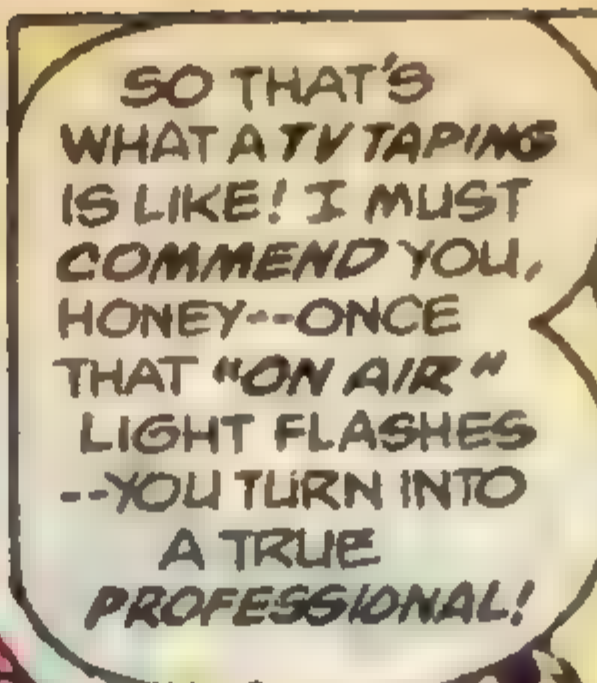
"...EVEN TO THIS DAY!"



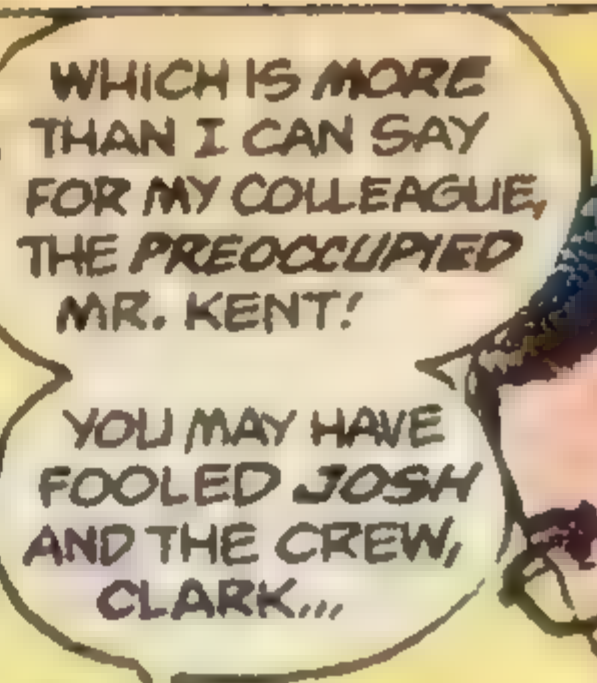


ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE-- IT'S A WRAP!

PACK UP THE EQUIPMENT, AND LET'S HEAD BACK TO THE STUDIO!

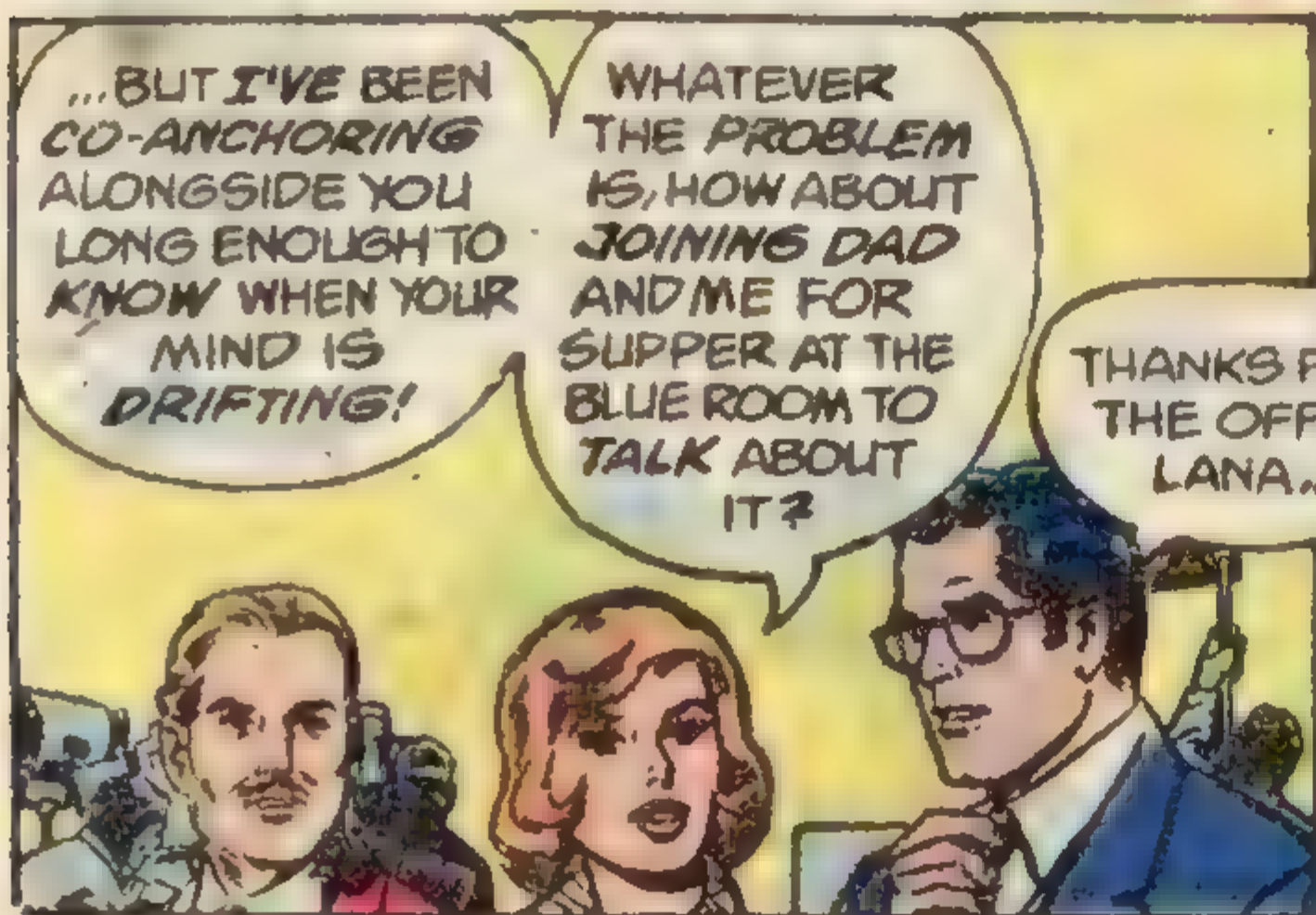


SO THAT'S WHAT A TV TAPING IS LIKE! I MUST COMMEND YOU, HONEY--ONCE THAT "ON AIR" LIGHT FLASHES--YOU TURN INTO A TRUE PROFESSIONAL!



WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR MY COLLEAGUE, THE PREOCCUPIED MR. KENT!

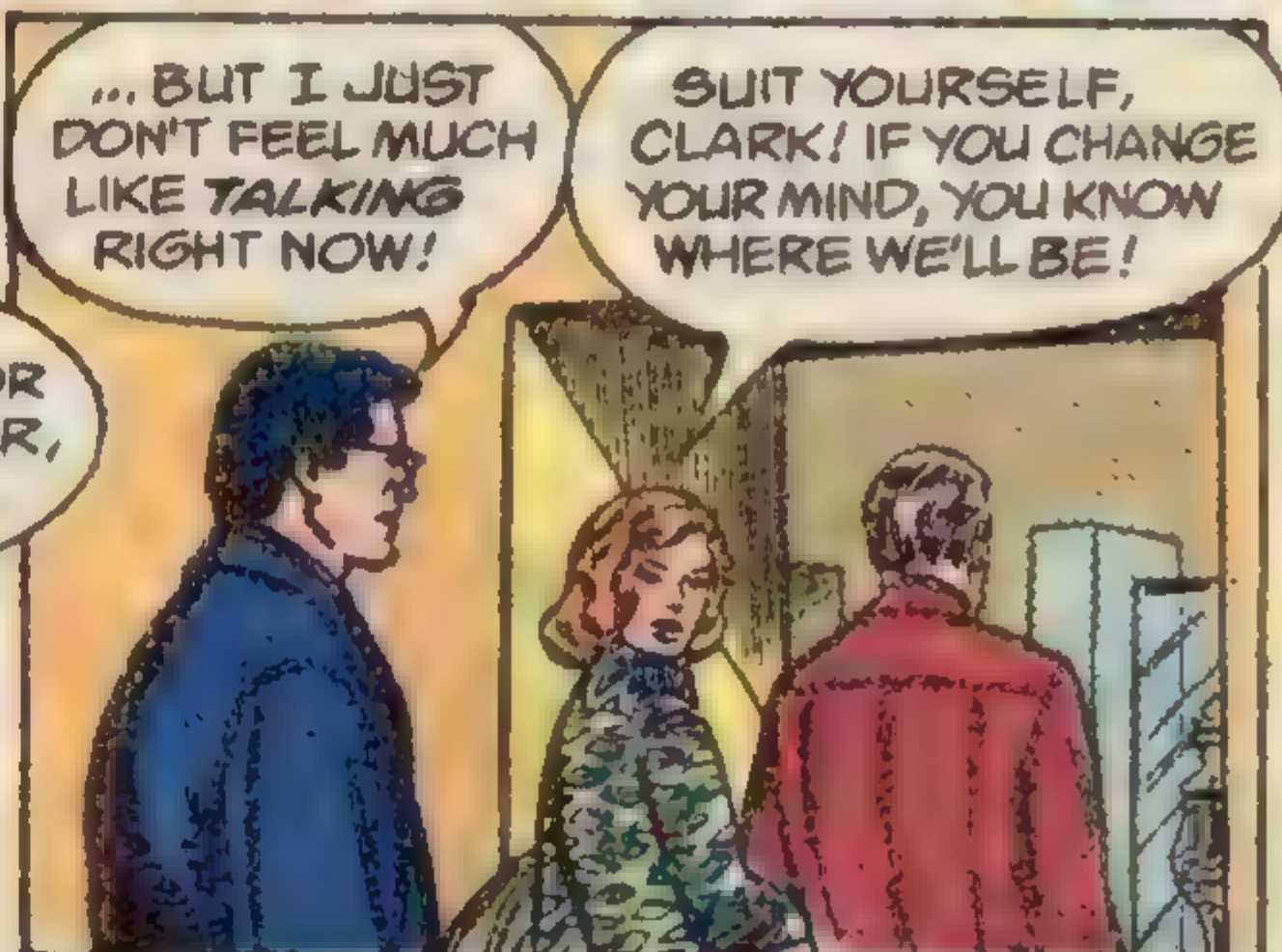
YOU MAY HAVE FOOLED JOSH AND THE CREW, CLARK...



...BUT I'VE BEEN CO-ANCHORING ALONGSIDE YOU LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW WHEN YOUR MIND IS DRIFTING!

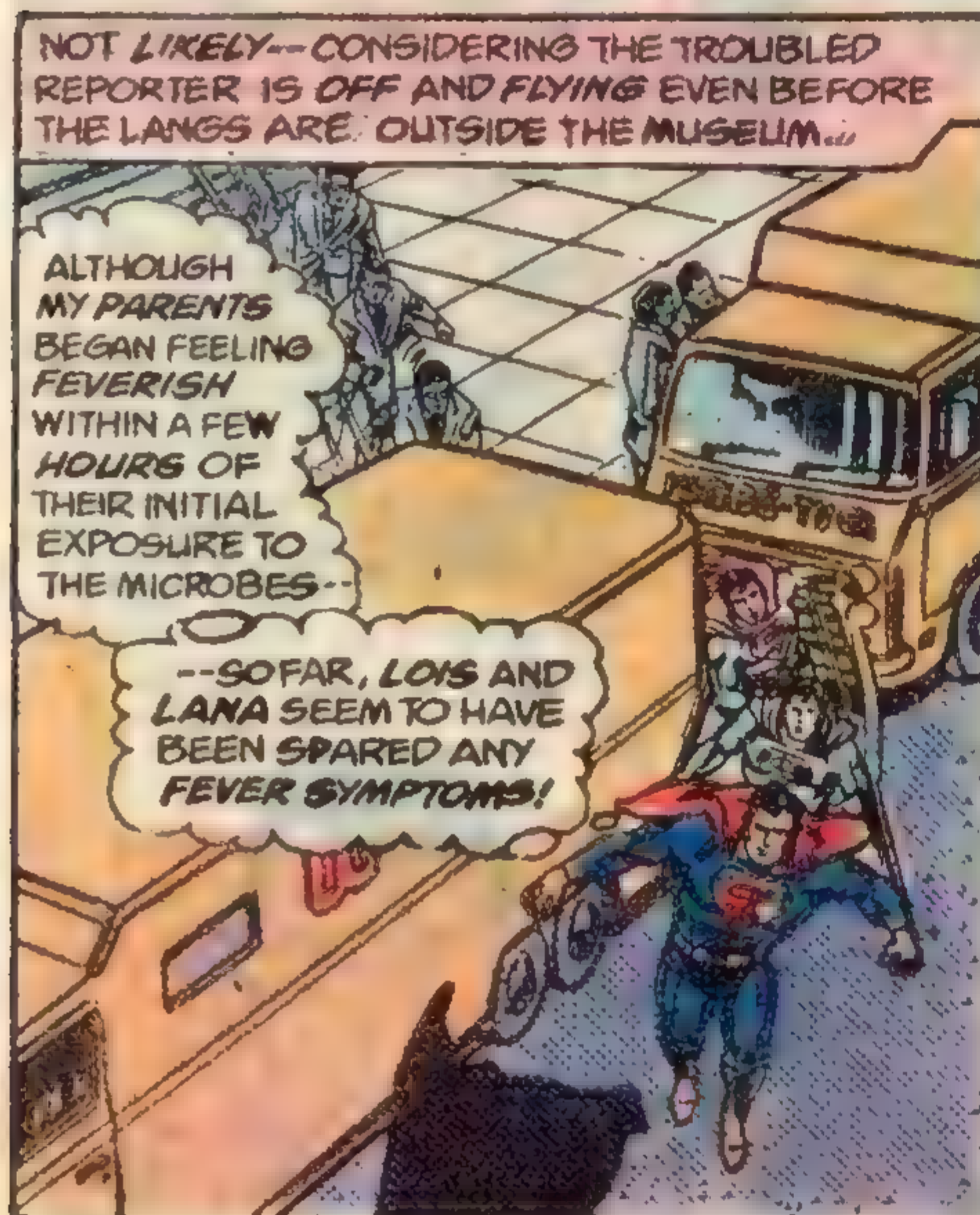
WHATEVER THE PROBLEM IS, HOW ABOUT JOINING DAD AND ME FOR SUPPER AT THE BLUE ROOM TO TALK ABOUT IT?

THANKS FOR THE OFFER, LANA...



...BUT I JUST DON'T FEEL MUCH LIKE TALKING RIGHT NOW!

SUIT YOURSELF, CLARK! IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, YOU KNOW WHERE WE'LL BE!



NOT LIKELY--CONSIDERING THE TROUBLED REPORTER IS OFF AND FLYING EVEN BEFORE THE LANGS ARE OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM...

ALTHOUGH MY PARENTS BEGAN FEELING FEVERISH WITHIN A FEW HOURS OF THEIR INITIAL EXPOSURE TO THE MICROBES--

--SOFAR, LOIS AND LANA SEEM TO HAVE BEEN SPARED ANY FEVER SYMPTOMS!



THEY'RE SO MUCH YOUNGER...THEIR IMMUNITY SYSTEMS ARE EVIDENTLY ABLE TO PUT UP MORE RESISTANCE BEFORE THE RAVAGING EFFECTS TAKE THEIR TOLL!

JUST AS WELL! THIS WAY THEY DON'T SUSPECT THEIR LIVES ARE EBBING AWAY BY THE MINUTE!

A SUPER-SWIFT FLIGHT NORTHWARD TO THE ARCTIC AND THE MAN OF STEEL IS ONCE AGAIN SEQUESTERED WITHIN HIS AWESOME FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE--IMBUED WITH NEW HOPE...

OF COURSE! I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT OF IT BEFORE! IT'S A DESPERATE MEASURE --AND CERTAINLY NO CURE--

--BLIT AT LEAST LOIS AND LANA...

...WON'T SUCCLUMB TO THE FEVER'S FINAL STAGES...

...NOT AFTER I'VE PROJECTED THEM INTO THE PHANTOM ZONE--THE LIMBO DIMENSION DISCOVERED BY MY FATHER, JOR-EL--WHERE CRIMINALS ON KRYPTON WERE EXILED TO SERVE OUT THEIR

SENTENCES AS DRIFTING PHANTOMS!

YEARS AGO, I TRIED USING THE PROJECTOR ON MA AND PA...

...BUT FREAK SUNSPOT ACTIVITY CREATED MAGNETIC ATMOSPHERIC DISTURBANCES BLOCKING INTER-DIMENSIONAL PASSAGE INTO THE ZONE!

BUT THIS TIME, ALL SYSTEMS READ GO! JUST A FEW MORE PRE-PROJECTION ADJUSTMENTS AND--

THAT'S ODD! SUDDEN OVERHEATING--

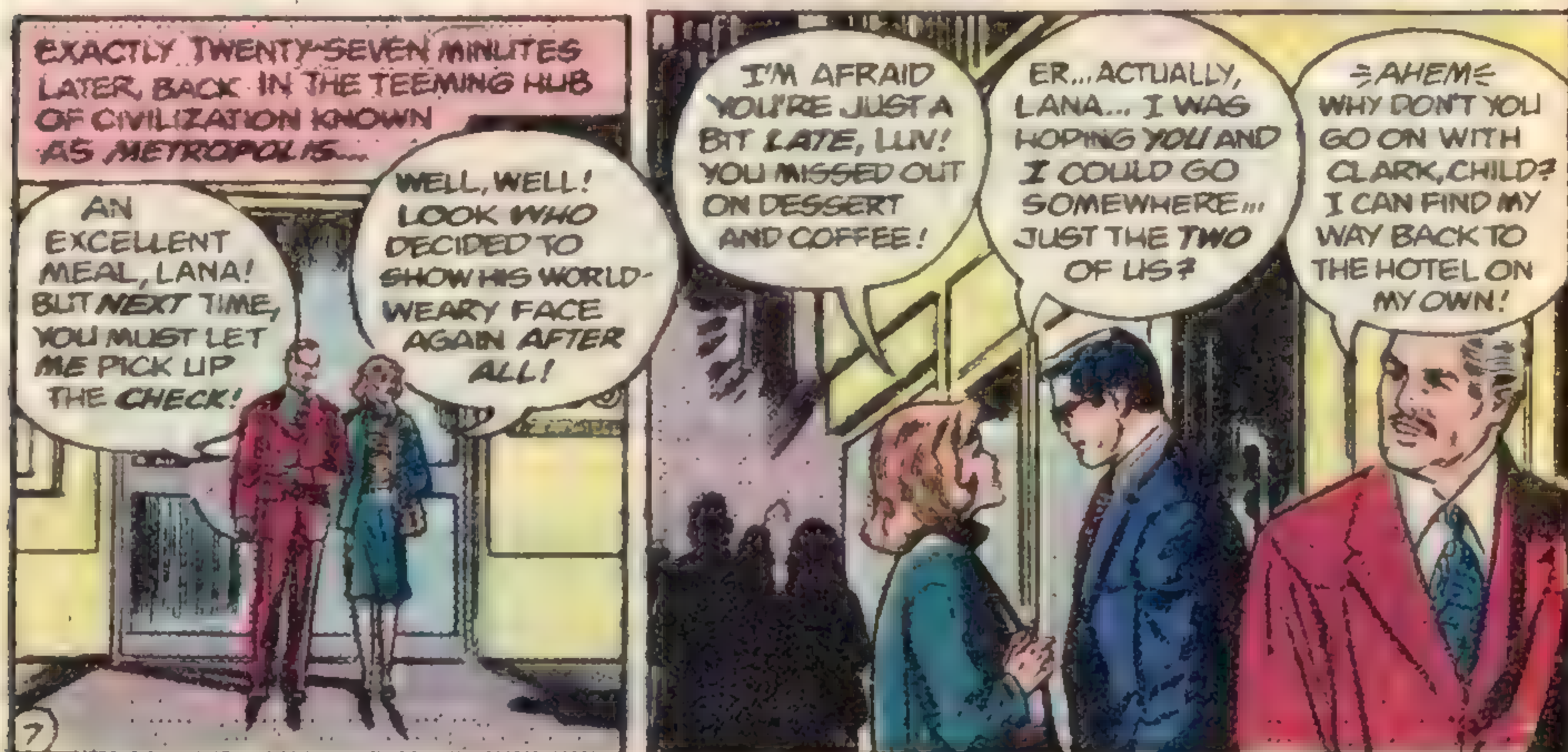
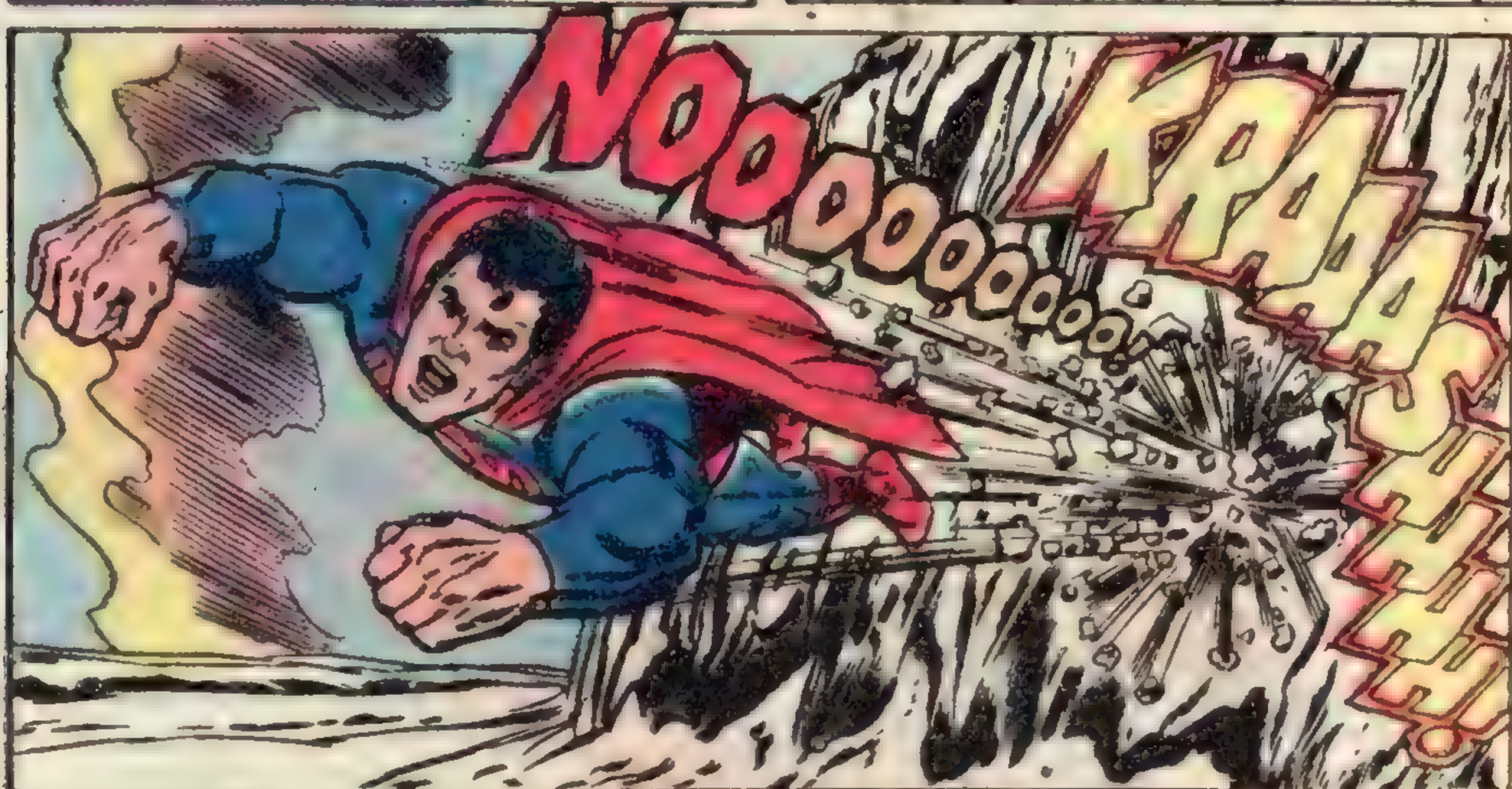
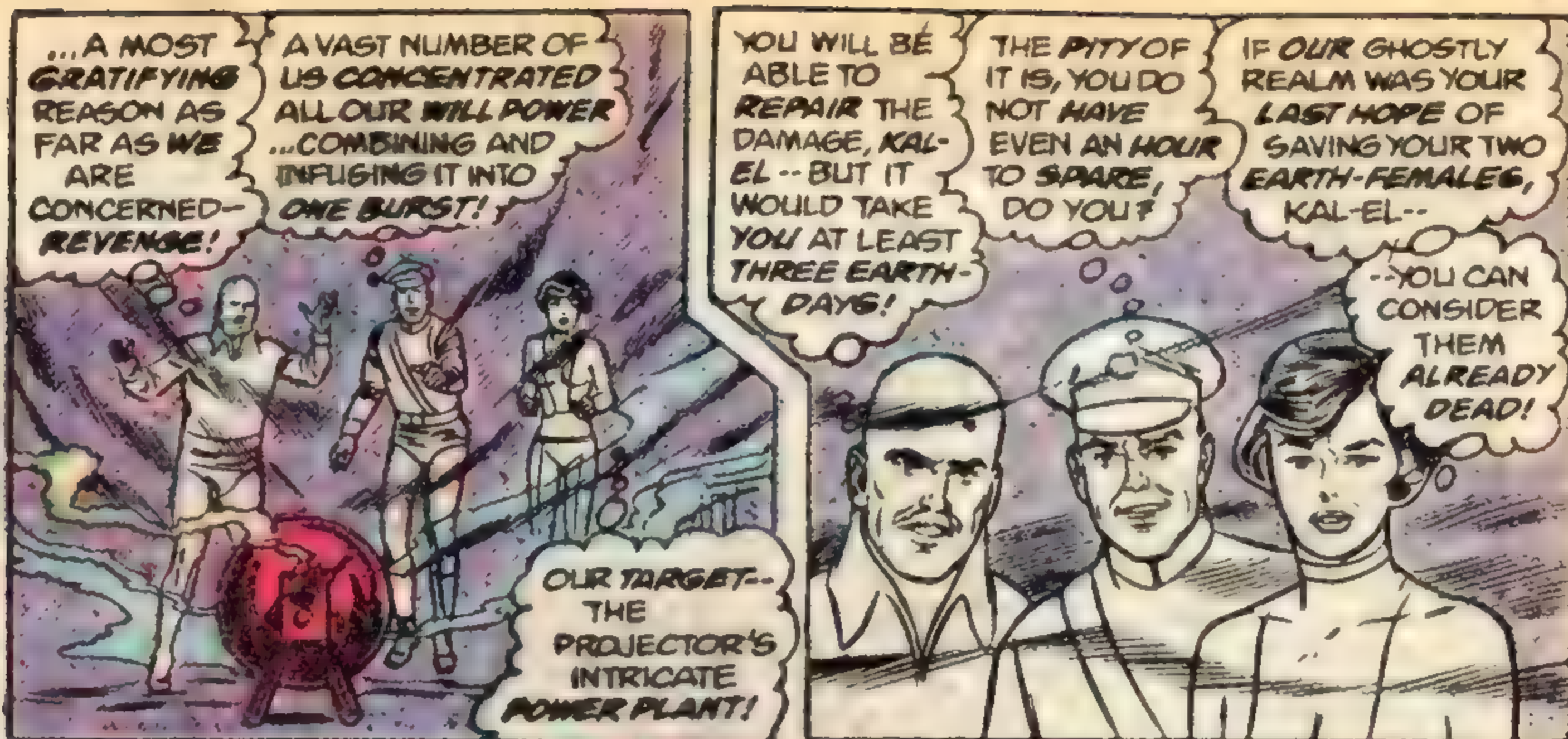
GREAT KRYPTON!

SINCE THE PROJECTOR IS A KRYPTONIAN DEVICE COMPOSED OF SUPER-DENSELY-PACKED KRYPTONIAN MOLECULES...

...EVEN A MAN OF STEEL CAN BE KNOCKED OFF HIS FEET BY SUCH AN EXPLOSIVE MALFUNCTION!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND! THERE WAS NO REASON...

OH, BUT THERE WAS, SON OF JOR-EL...

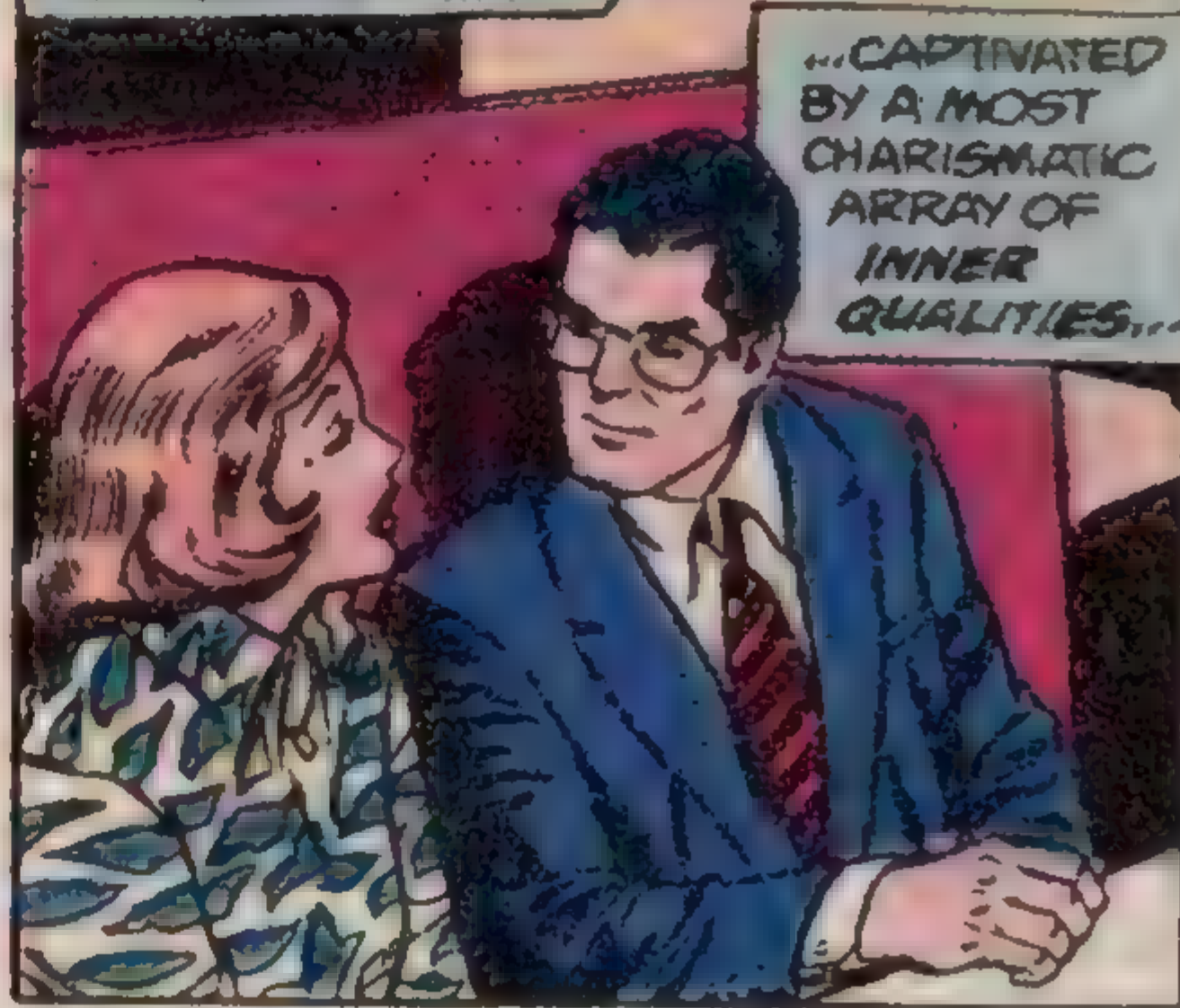


SOON--TWO OF THE MOST FAMOUS TV PERSONALITIES IN METROPOLIS ARE SHARING A MIDNIGHT RENDEZVOUS HIGH OVER THE CITY STREETS...



AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE MANY YEARS THEY'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER--THE FLAME-HAIRED BEAUTY GAZES AT HER BESPECTACLED, MILD-MANNERED ESCORT...

...AND FINDS HERSELF TOTALLY ENRAPTURED... CAPTIVATED BY A SUBTLE CHARM AND QUIET STRENGTH IN HER FORMER SMALLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATE...



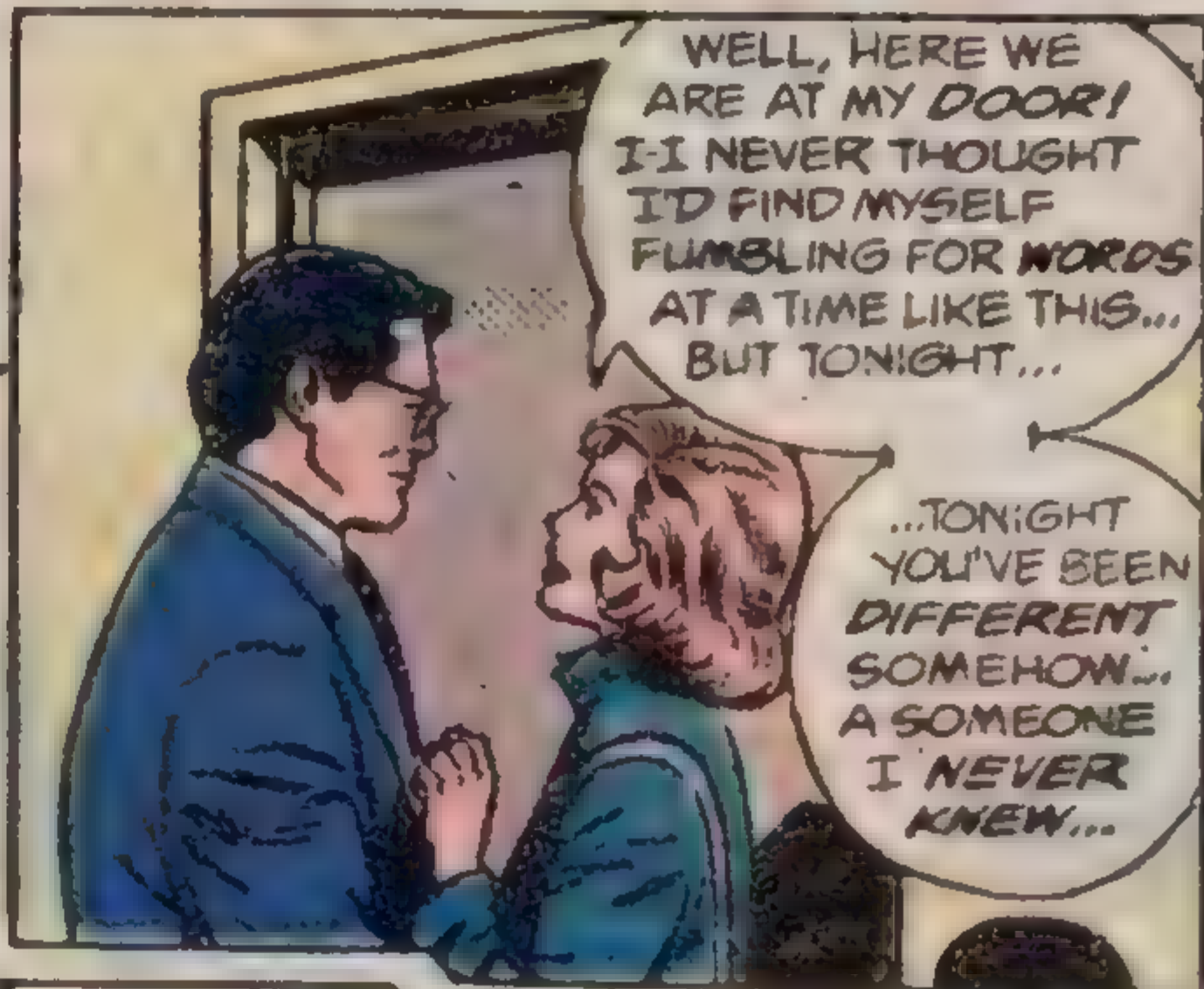
...CAPTIVATED BY A MOST CHARISMATIC ARRAY OF INNER QUALITIES...

...QUALITIES SHE NEVER BEFORE DREAMT OF FINDING IN THE PERPLEXING PUZZLE OF A MAN WHO WORKS ALONGSIDE HER DAY AFTER DAY!



I DON'T BELIEVE IT! GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, GIRL--

--YOU CAN'T REALLY BE FALLING FOR CLARK KENT!



WELL, HERE WE ARE AT MY DOOR! I-I NEVER THOUGHT I'D FIND MYSELF FUMBLING FOR WORDS AT A TIME LIKE THIS... BUT TONIGHT...

...TONIGHT YOU'VE BEEN DIFFERENT SOMEHOW... A SOMEONE I NEVER KNEW...

...A SOMEONE I DEFINITELY WANT TO KNOW BETTER FROM NOW ON!



LANA... LANA! I NEED YOUR HELP!

OH...WHAT IS IT, MRS. NELSON? YOUR CAT HIDING UNDER THE BED AGAIN?

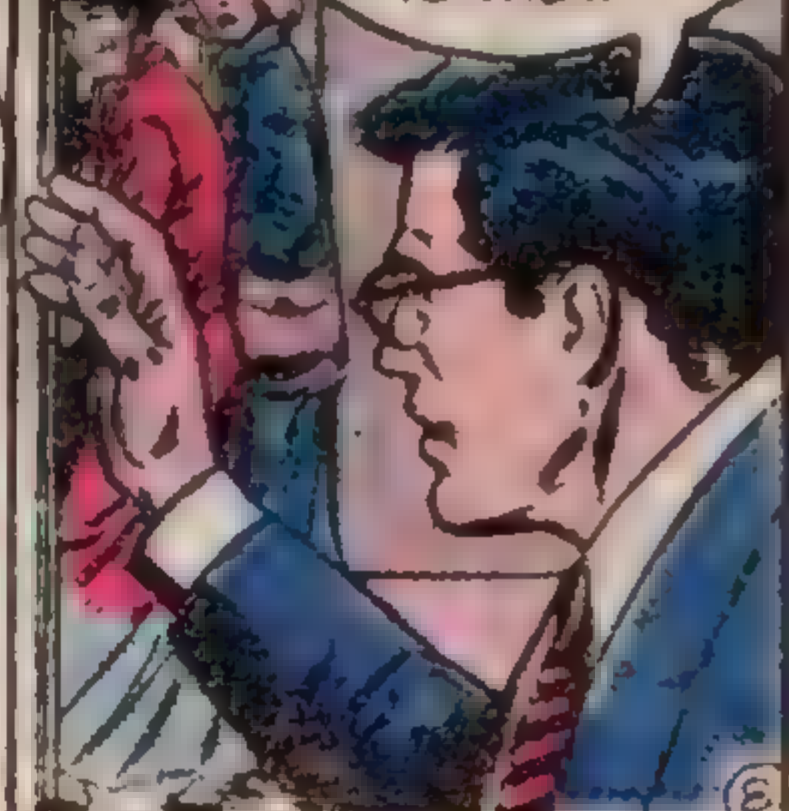


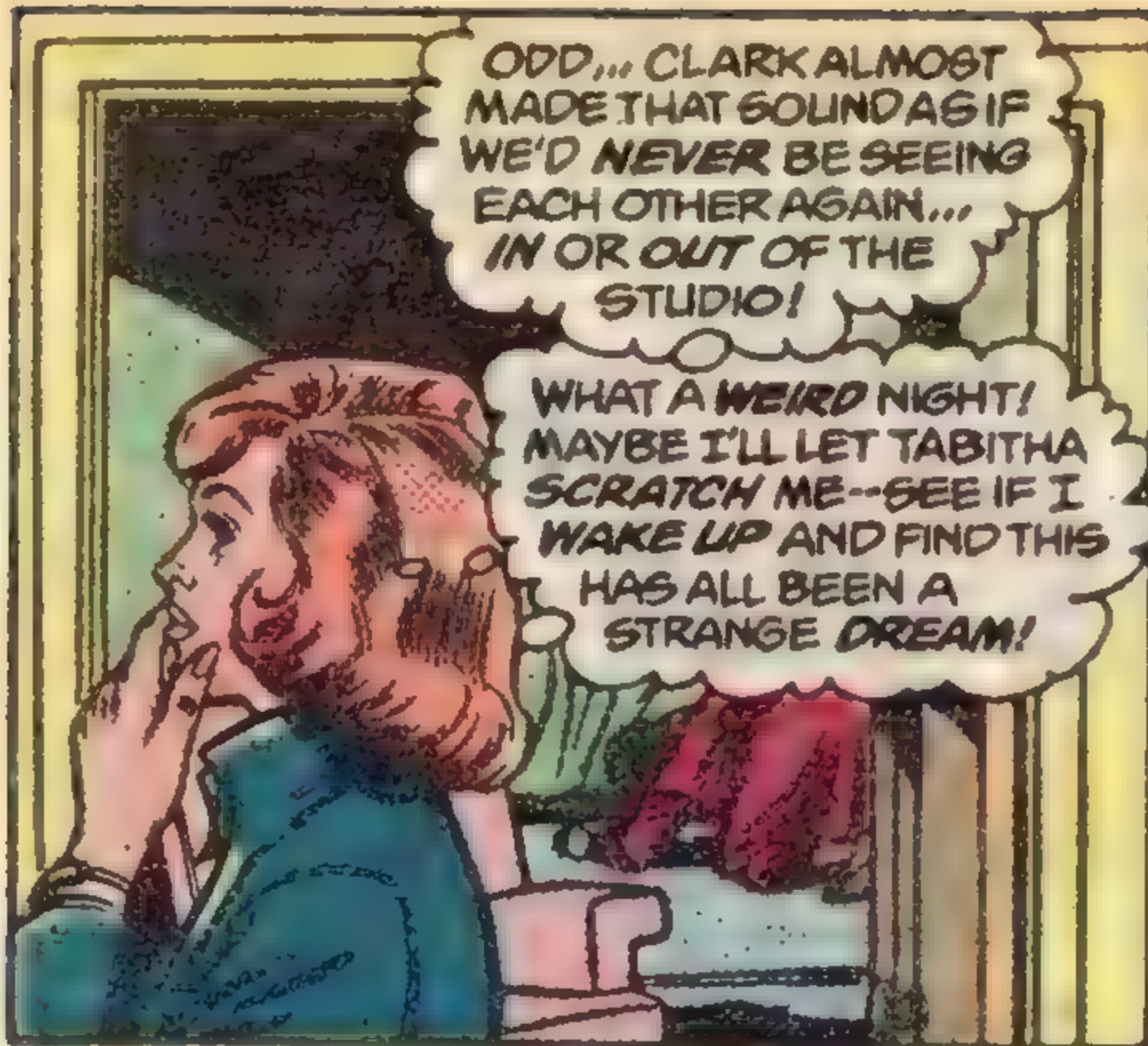
FOR TWO DAYS NOW, LANA... THE POOR THING HASN'T EATEN A MORSEL! I'M SO WORRIED... AND YOU'RE SO GOOD AT COAXING TABITHA OUT!

PLEASE... WOULD YOU MIND?

DON'T GO, CLARK-- THIS'LL JUST TAKE A SEC--

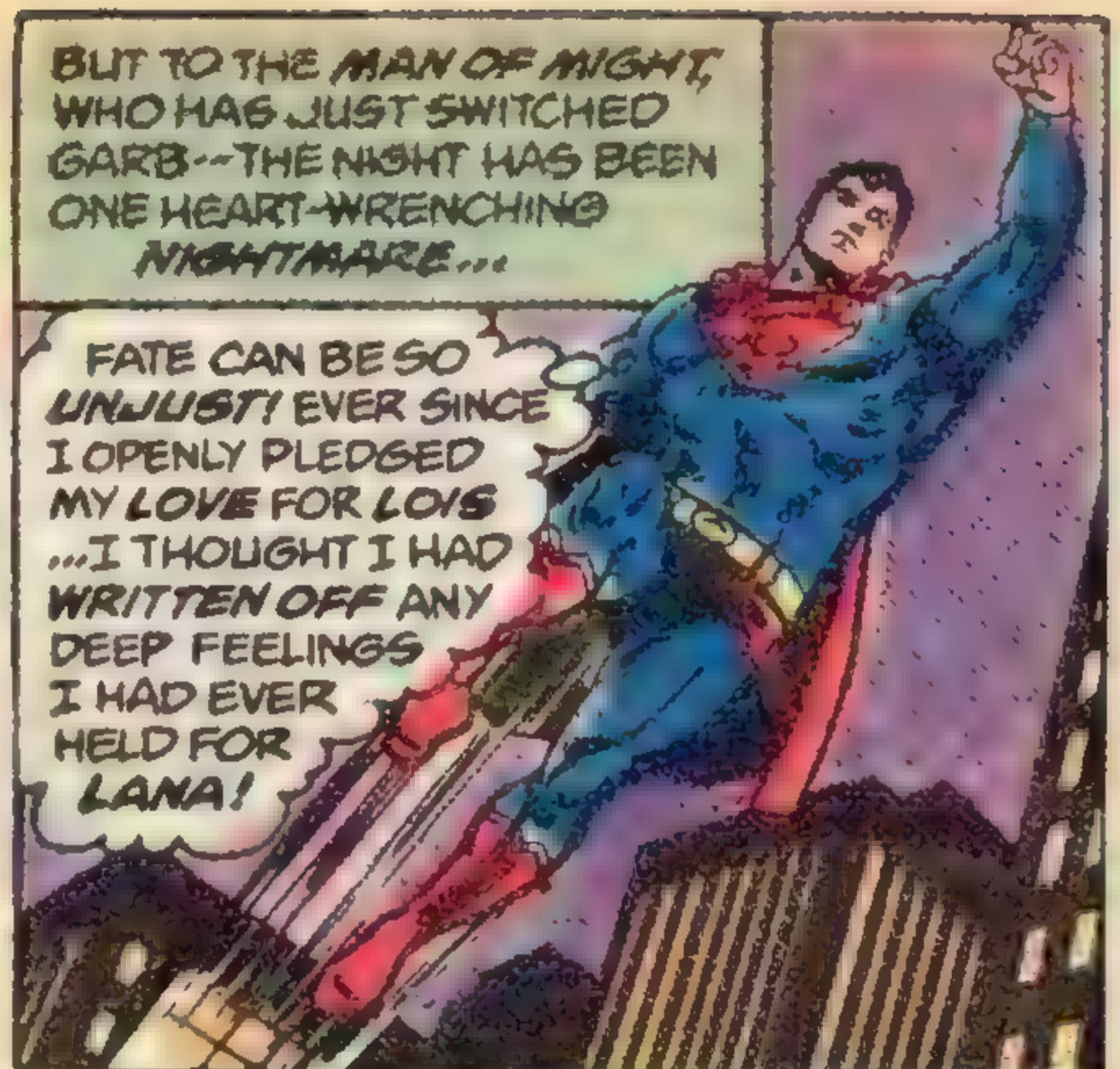
ER... I STILL HAVE A LONG NIGHT AHEAD OF ME, LANA... BUT THANKS! THESE PAST FEW HOURS WILL ALWAYS MEAN SOMETHING EXTRA-SPECIAL TO ME...





ODD... CLARK ALMOST
MADE THAT SOUND AS IF
WE'D NEVER BE SEEING
EACH OTHER AGAIN...
IN OR OUT OF THE
STUDIO!

WHAT A WEIRD NIGHT!
MAYBE I'LL LET TABITHA
SCRATCH ME--SEE IF I
WAKE UP AND FIND THIS
HAS ALL BEEN A
STRANGE DREAM!



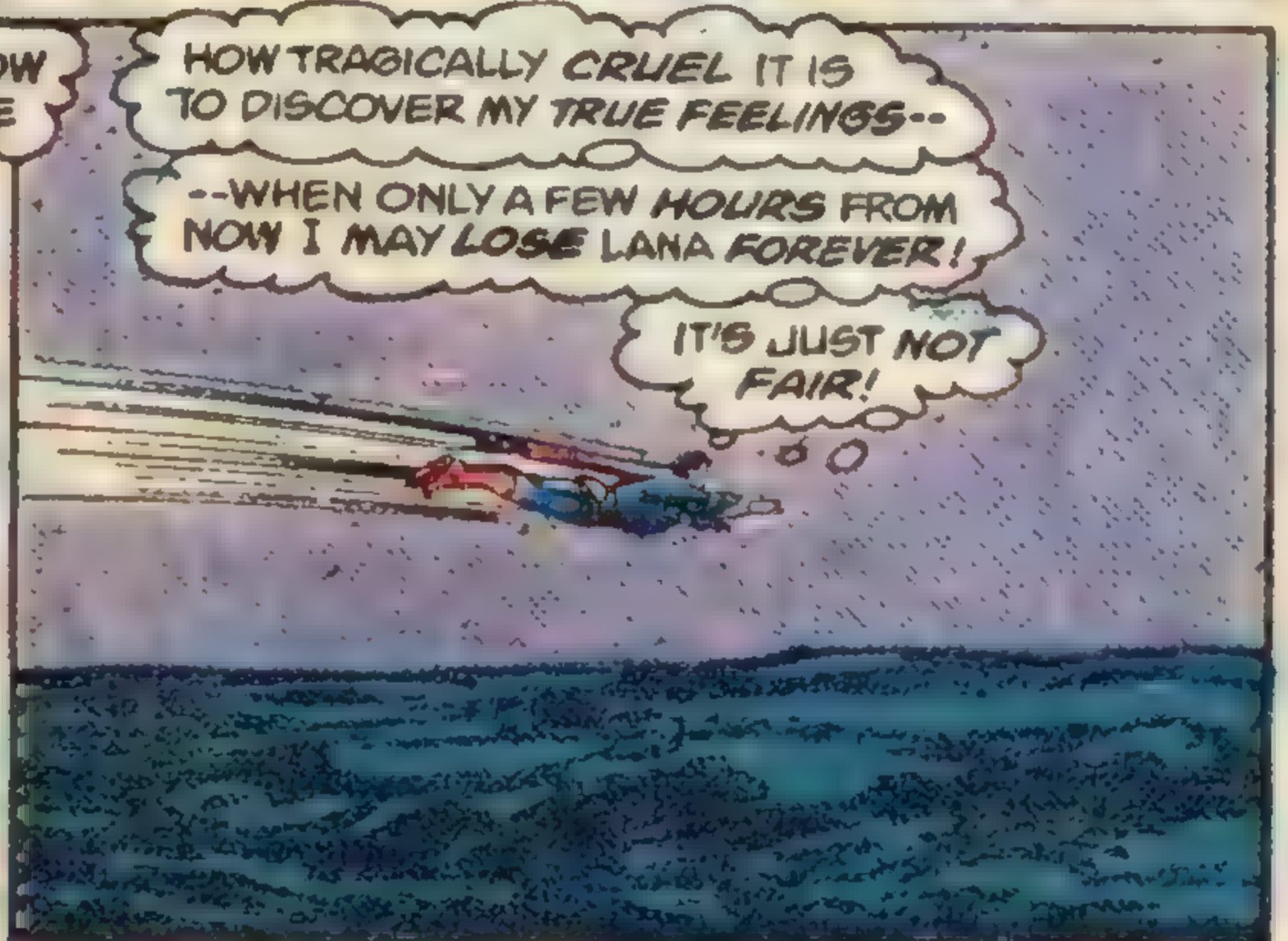
BUT TO THE MAN OF MIGHT,
WHO HAS JUST SWITCHED
GARB--THE NIGHT HAS BEEN
ONE HEART-WRENCHING
NIGHTMARE...

FATE CAN BE SO
UNJUST! EVER SINCE
I OPENLY PLEDGED
MY LOVE FOR LOIS
...I THOUGHT I HAD
WRITTEN OFF ANY
DEEP FEELINGS
I HAD EVER
HELD FOR
LANA!



YET TONIGHT I FINALLY REALIZED HOW
IMPORTANT SHE HAS BEEN TO MY LIFE
EVER SINCE WE WERE TODDLERS
TOGETHER IN SMALLVILLE...

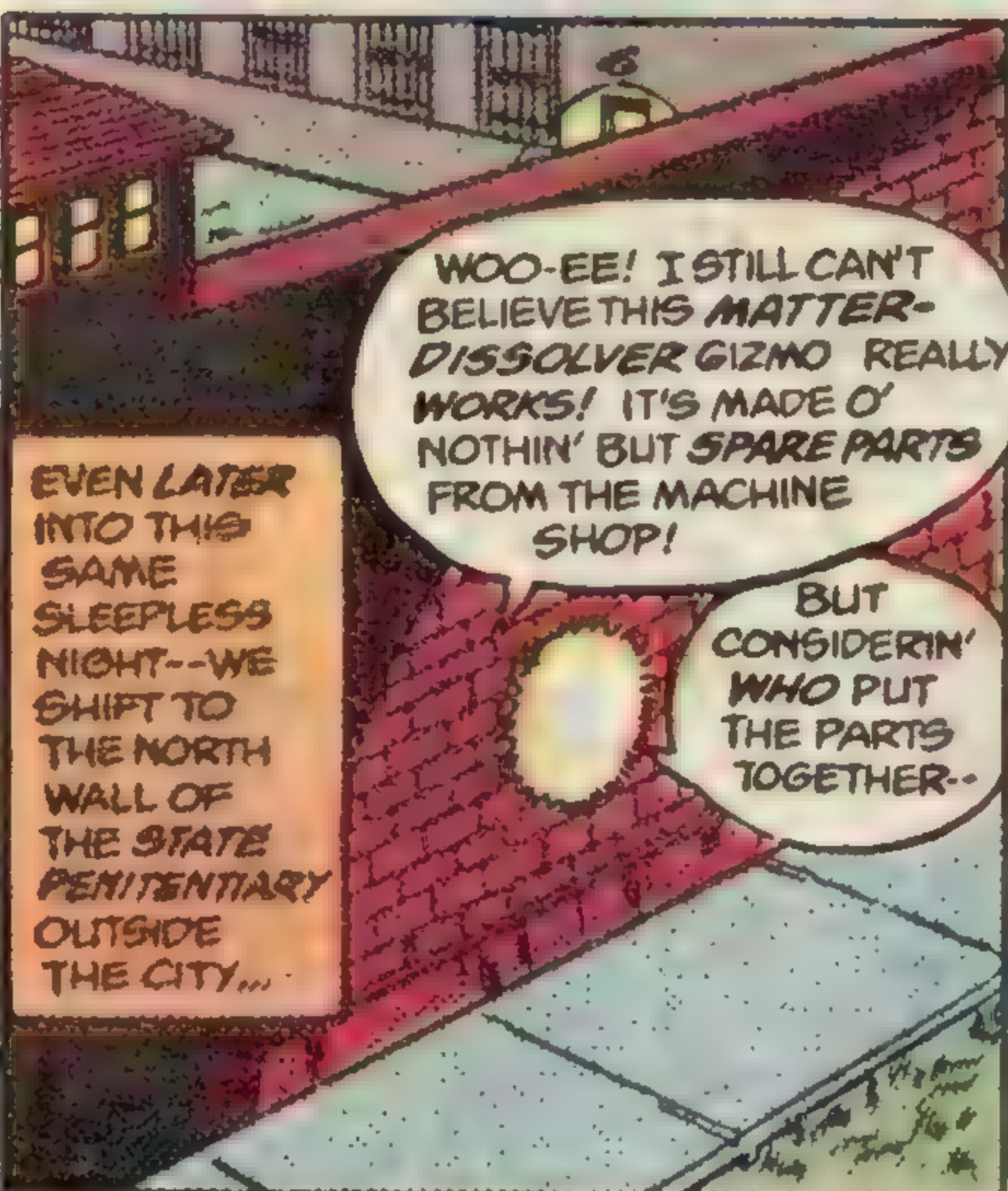
...AND HOW
VERY MUCH I
STILL CARE FOR
HER... AS MUCH
AS I'D CHERISH
THE SISTER
I NEVER HAD!



HOW TRAGICALLY CRUEL IT IS
TO DISCOVER MY TRUE FEELINGS--

--WHEN ONLY A FEW HOURS FROM
NOW I MAY LOSE LANA FOREVER!

IT'S JUST NOT
FAIR!



WOO-EE! I STILL CAN'T
BELIEVE THIS MATTER-
DISSOLVER GIZMO REALLY
WORKS! IT'S MADE O'
NOTHIN' BUT SPARE PARTS
FROM THE MACHINE
SHOP!

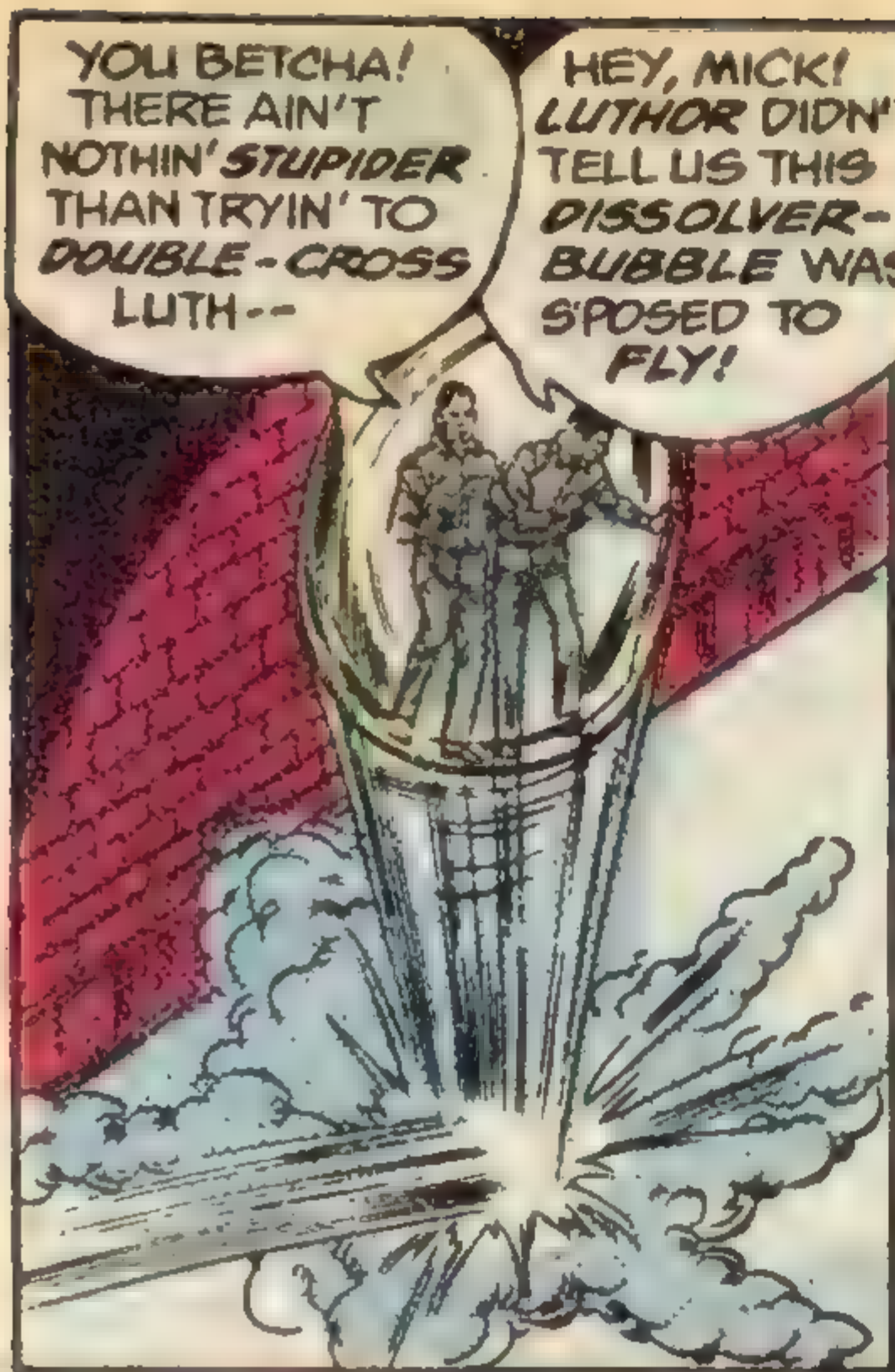
BUT
CONSIDERIN'
WHO PUT
THE PARTS
TOGETHER--

EVEN LATER
INTO THIS
SAME
SLEEPLESS
NIGHT--WE
SHIFT TO
THE NORTH
WALL OF
THE STATE
PENITENTIARY
OUTSIDE
THE CITY...



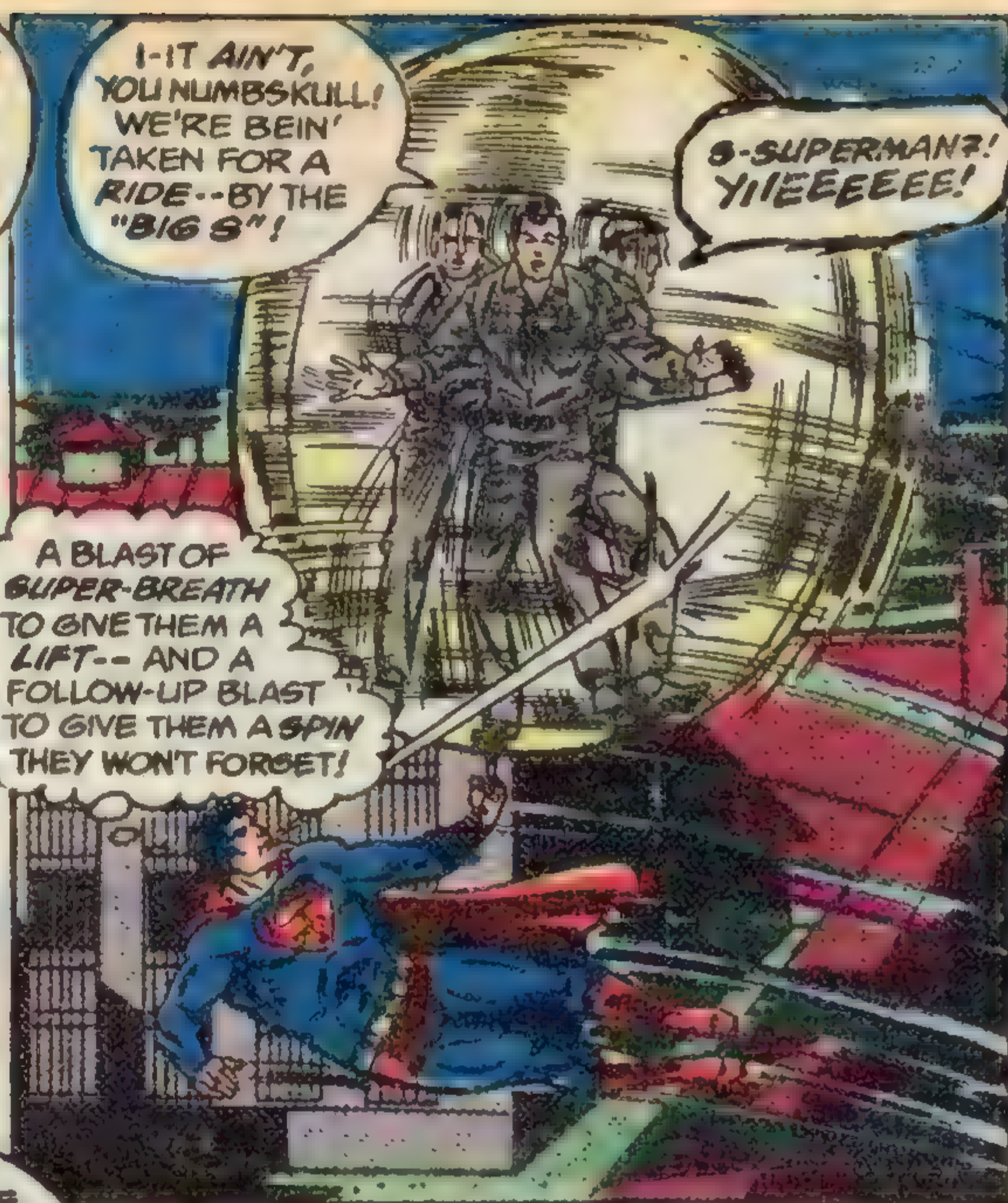
--LEX LUTHOR--
I AIN'T SURPRISED!
THE GUY'S A
BLAMED GENIUS!

AFTER PROVIDIN'
US WITH SUCH A
SNAP GETAWAY... I
SUPPOSE THE LEAST
WE CAN DO IS HOLD
UP OUR END OF THE
DEAL AND MAKE
THOSE "ARRANGE-
MENTS" IN
METROPOLIS
FOR HIM!



YOU BETCHA!
THERE AIN'T
NOTHIN' **STUPIDER**
THAN TRYIN' TO
DOUBLE-CROSS
LUTH--

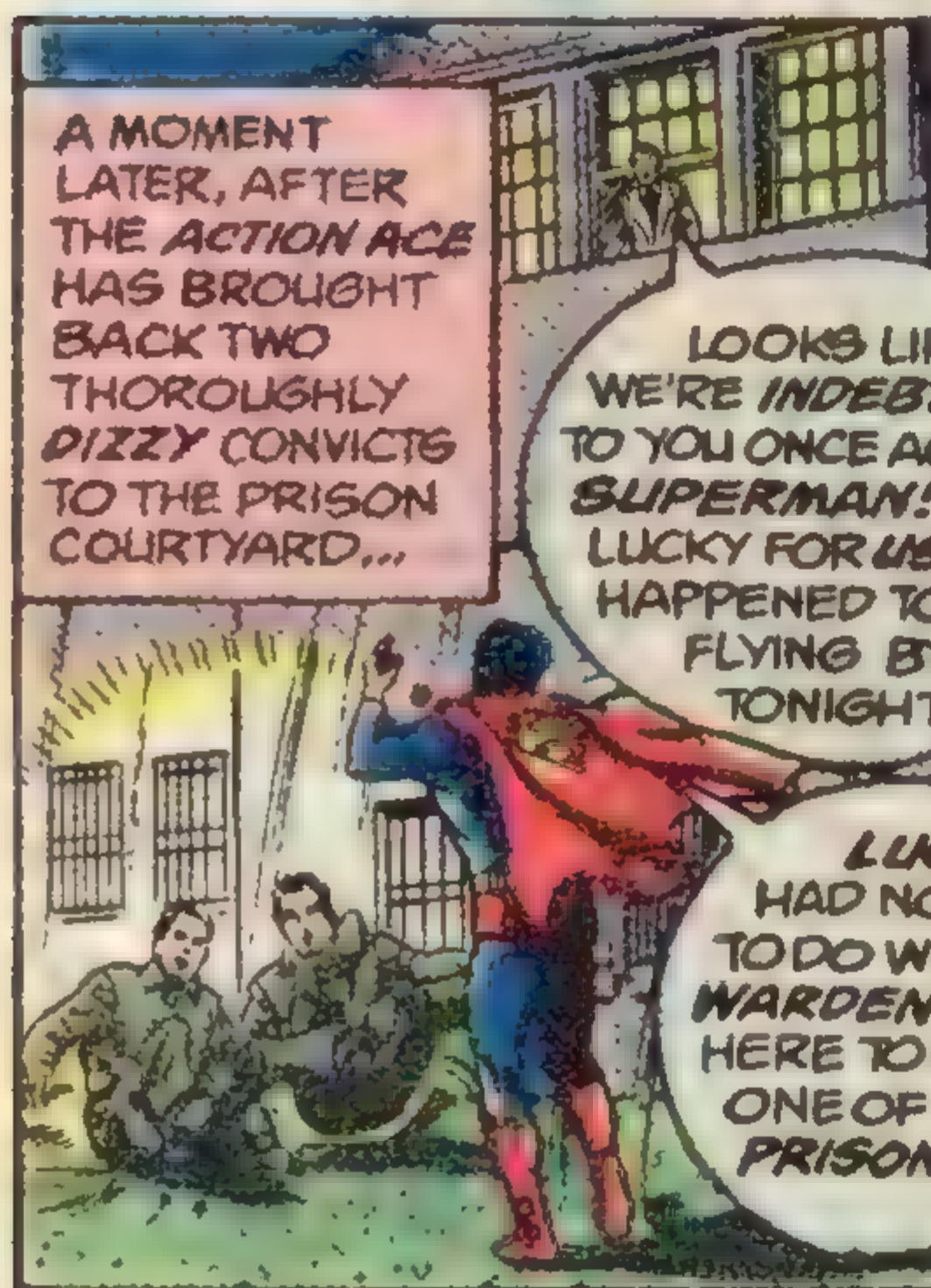
HEY, MICK!
LUTHOR DIDN'T
TELL US THIS
DISSOLVER-
BUBBLE WAS
SPOSED TO
FLY!



I-IT AIN'T,
YOU NUMBSKULL!
WE'RE BEIN'
TAKEN FOR A
RIDE--BY THE
"BIG S"!

S-SUPERMAN?!
YIIEEEEEE!

A BLAST OF
SUPER-BREATH
TO GIVE THEM A
LIFT-- AND A
FOLLOW-UP BLAST
TO GIVE THEM A **SPIN**
THEY WON'T FORGET!



A MOMENT
LATER, AFTER
THE **ACTION ACE**
HAS BROUGHT
BACK TWO
THOROUGHLY
DIZZY CONVICTS
TO THE PRISON
COURTYARD...

LOOKS LIKE
WE'RE **INDEBTED**
TO YOU ONCE AGAIN,
SUPERMAN! SURE
LUCKY FOR US YOU
HAPPENED TO BE
FLYING BY
TONIGHT!

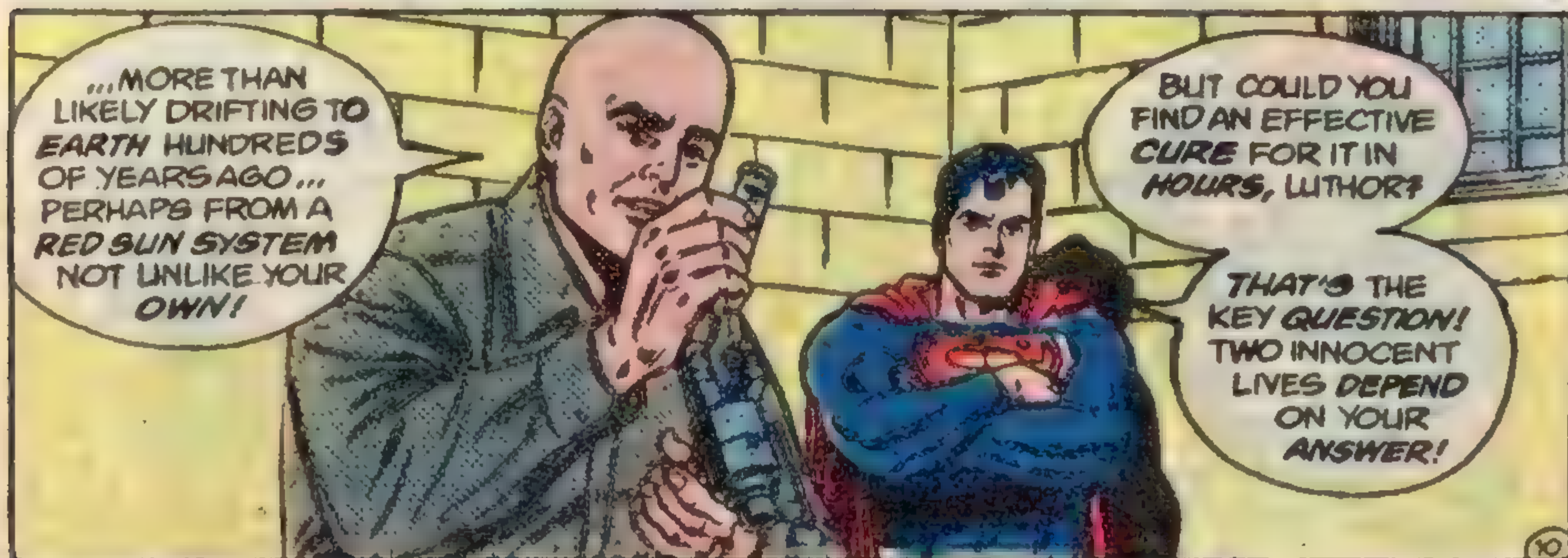
LUCK
HAD NOTHING
TO DO WITH IT,
WARDEN! I'M
HERE TO **SEE**
ONE OF YOUR
PRISONERS!

SOON, IN A TRIPLE-
SECURITY CELL...



HMMM... THIS MINIATURE
MICRO-VIEWING DEVICE
YOU SUPPLIED IS PROVIDING
MORE THAN ADEQUATE
MAGNIFICATION!

LITTLE
WONDER IT'S SO
RESISTANT!
JUDGING FROM THIS
BIZARRE HELICAL
SYMMETRY, I'D
GUESS YOUR MICROBE
WAS **EXTRA-**
TERRESTRIAL
IN ORIGIN...



...MORE THAN
LIKELY DRIFTING TO
EARTH HUNDREDS
OF YEARS AGO...
PERHAPS FROM A
RED SUN SYSTEM
NOT UNLIKE YOUR
OWN!

BUT COULD YOU
FIND AN EFFECTIVE
CURE FOR IT IN
HOURS, LUTHOR?

THAT'S THE
KEY QUESTION!
TWO INNOCENT
LIVES DEPEND
ON YOUR
ANSWER!

LET'S SAY MY ODDS OF SUCCESS ARE IN THE 90 PERCENTILE RANGE! BUT THE REAL QUESTION HERE IS NOT COULD I GRANT YOUR REQUEST AND SAVE THE LIVES OF THE MISSES LANE AND LANG--

-- BUT WOULD I?

IT SHOULD NOT SURPRISE YOU, OLD FOE...

...THAT IN THE REALM OF POLITE CONVERSATION, MY ANSWER WOULD BE UNREPEATABLE, TO SAY THE LEAST!

IN ONE WORD, SUPERMAN--A RICHLY SATISFYING, HEARTFELT... NO!

NO!!

I DON'T SUPPOSE EVEN A POSSIBLE PARDON WOULD CHANGE YOUR MIND? AFTER GETTING ONE SUCH PRESIDENTIAL PARDON, YOU STILL COULDN'T STAY OUT OF PRISON!

MAYBE I HAD REASONS FOR WANTING TO RETURN! YET YOU COULD FORCE ME TO FIND THE CURE--

--SIMPLY BY BREAKING OPEN THIS VIAL SO I'D BE INFECTED BY THE MICROBE TOO! THEN I'D HAVE TO DEVISE A CURE...TO SAVE MY OWN SKIN!

GREAT KRYPTON!

AND AS SUPER-SWIFT REFLEXES COME INTO PLAY...

= Whew =
ANOTHER HUNDREDTH OF A SECOND AND IT WOULD'VE SHATTERED--RELEASING THE MICROBES!

HA, HA! EVEN WHEN I LITERALLY THROW THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFECT ME IN YOUR FACE, STILL YOU SAVE ME...

...NO DOUBT BECAUSE OF THAT SELF-RIGHTEOUS CODE YOU LIVE BY! FOR ON THE SLIGHTEST SLIVER OF A CHANCE I COULDN'T COME UP WITH A CURE...

...YOU'D BE IN EFFECT DOOMING ME TOO! AND AS DESPERATE AS YOU ARE--

--YOU'D NEVER DREAM OF RISKING THE LIFE OF YOUR ARCH-FOE IN ANY WAY...EVEN IF ABIDING BY YOUR CODE MEANS YOUR LADY FRIENDS WILL SURELY DIE!

I THINK THAT'S MARVELOUSLY FUNNY. DON'T YOU? HA HA HA!

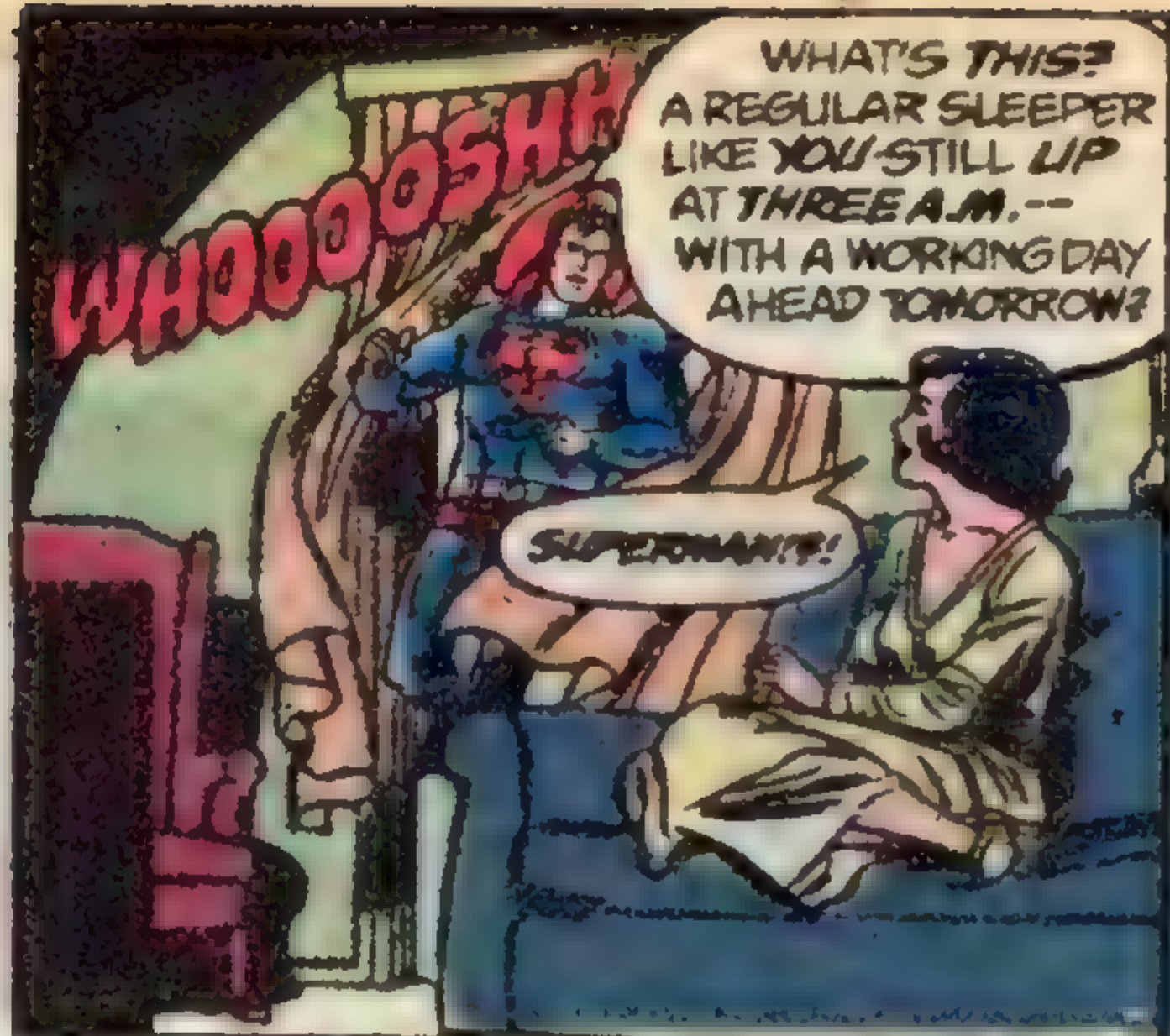
THE FIEND...

GUARD--!

STILL LATER THIS SAME FITFUL NIGHT--IN THE METROPOLIS APARTMENT OF A CERTAIN ACE DAILY PLANET REPORTER...

MA CHÉRIE... I WANT US TO SPEND THE REST OF OUR LIVES TOGETHER HERE IN **DAY PAREE!**

OH, ANDRÉ... THOSE ARE THE VERY WORDS I WAS ABOUT TO SAY TO YOU!



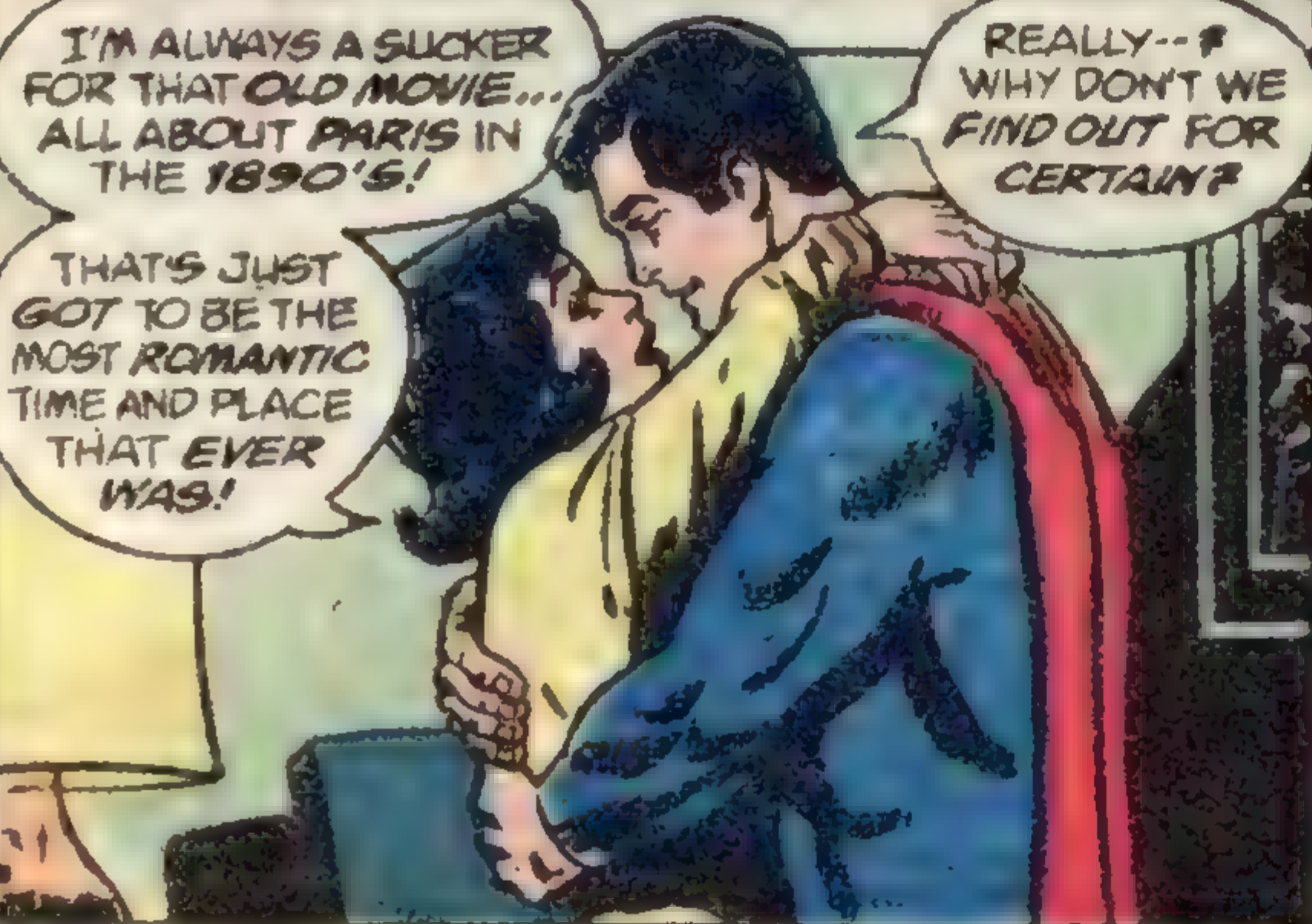
WHAT'S THIS? A REGULAR SLEEPER LIKE YOU STILL UP AT THREE A.M.-- WITH A WORKING DAY AHEAD TOMORROW?

SUPERMAN!

I'M ALWAYS A SUCKER FOR THAT OLD MOVIE... ALL ABOUT PARIS IN THE 1890'S!

THAT'S JUST GOT TO BE THE MOST ROMANTIC TIME AND PLACE THAT EVER WAS!

REALLY--? WHY DON'T WE FIND OUT FOR CERTAIN?

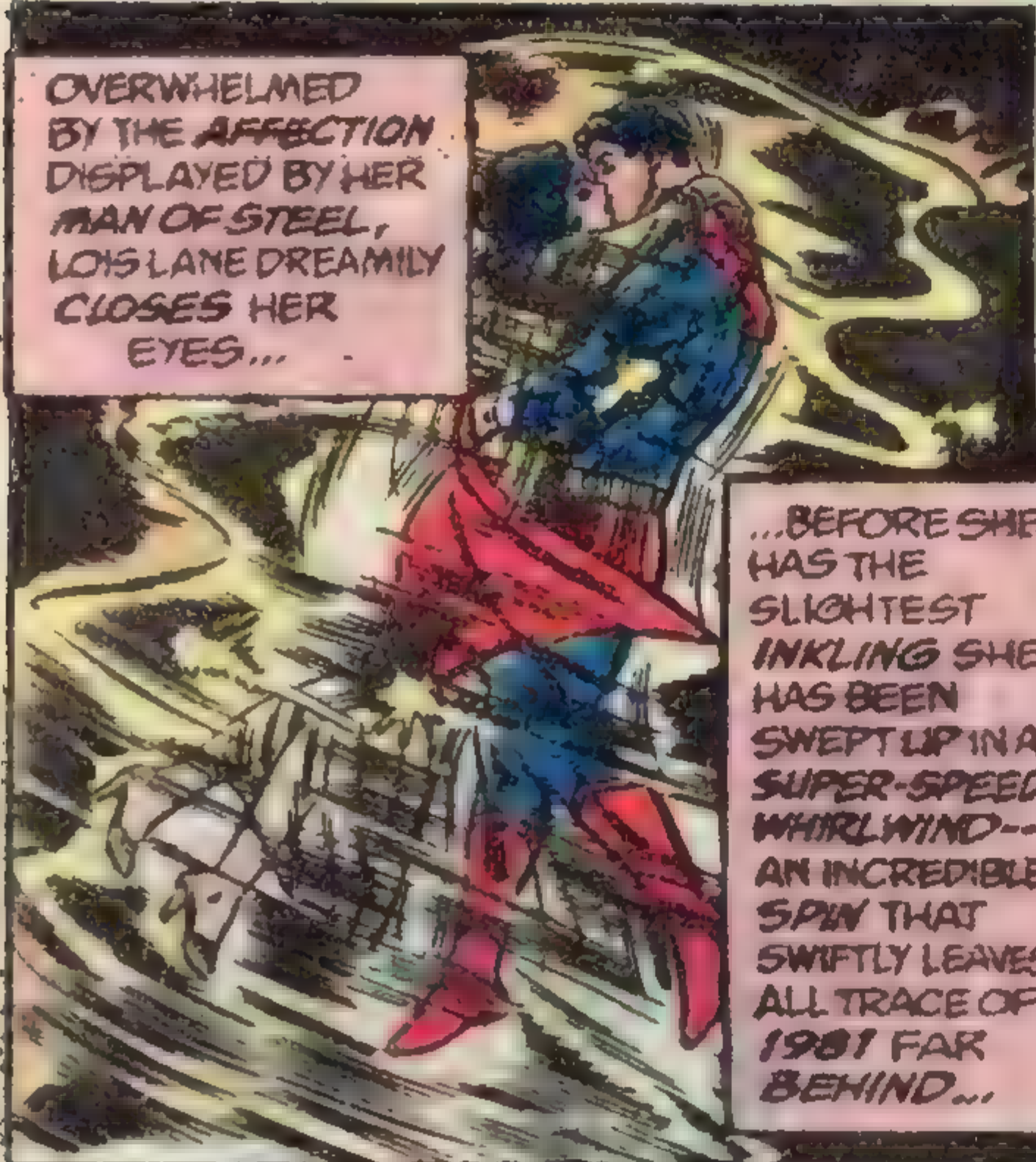


WHY DON'T WE WHAT--? SUPERMAN, ARE YOU ALL RI--

MMFFFFF!



OVERWHELMED BY THE AFFECTION DISPLAYED BY HER MAN OF STEEL, LOIS LANE DREAMILY CLOSES HER EYES...



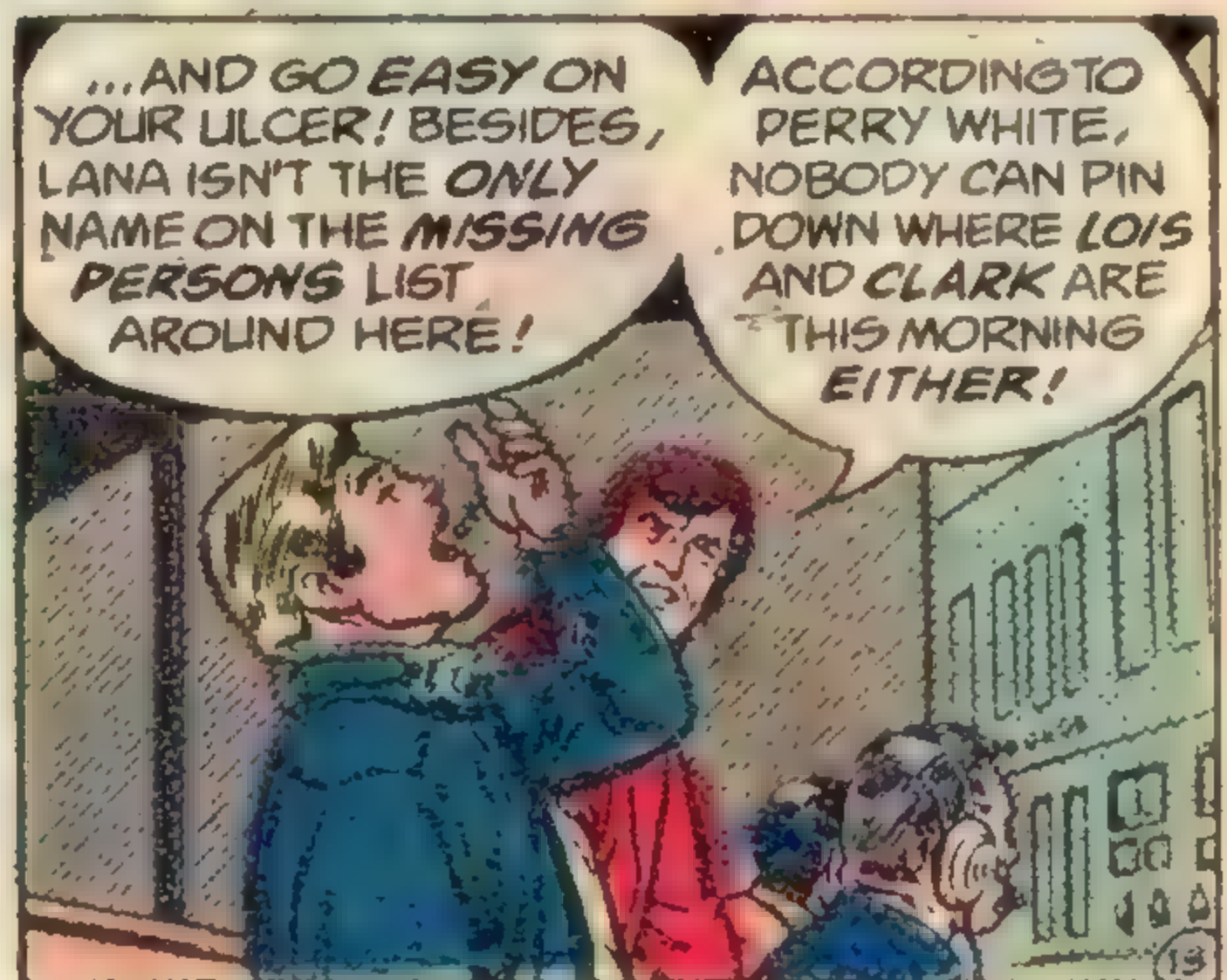
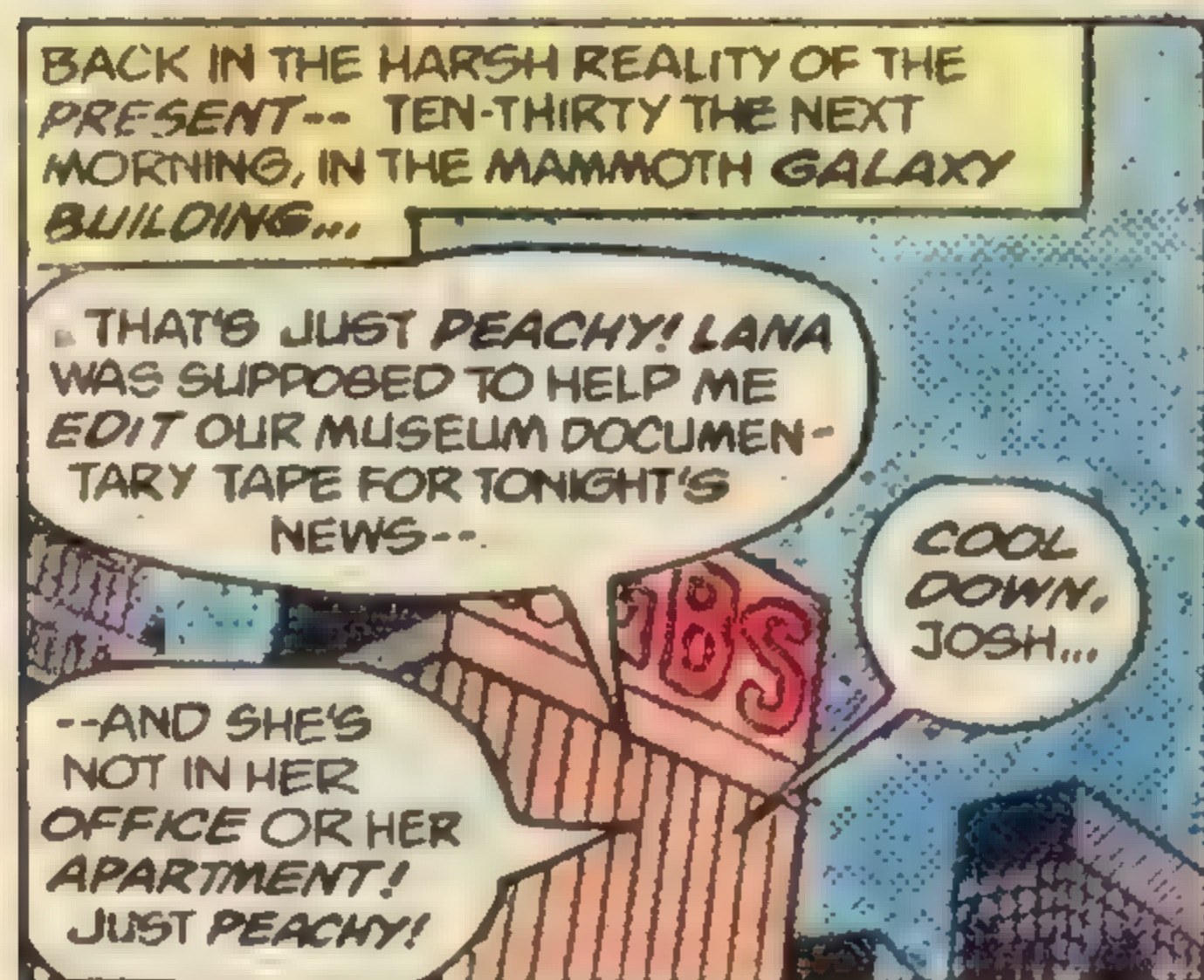
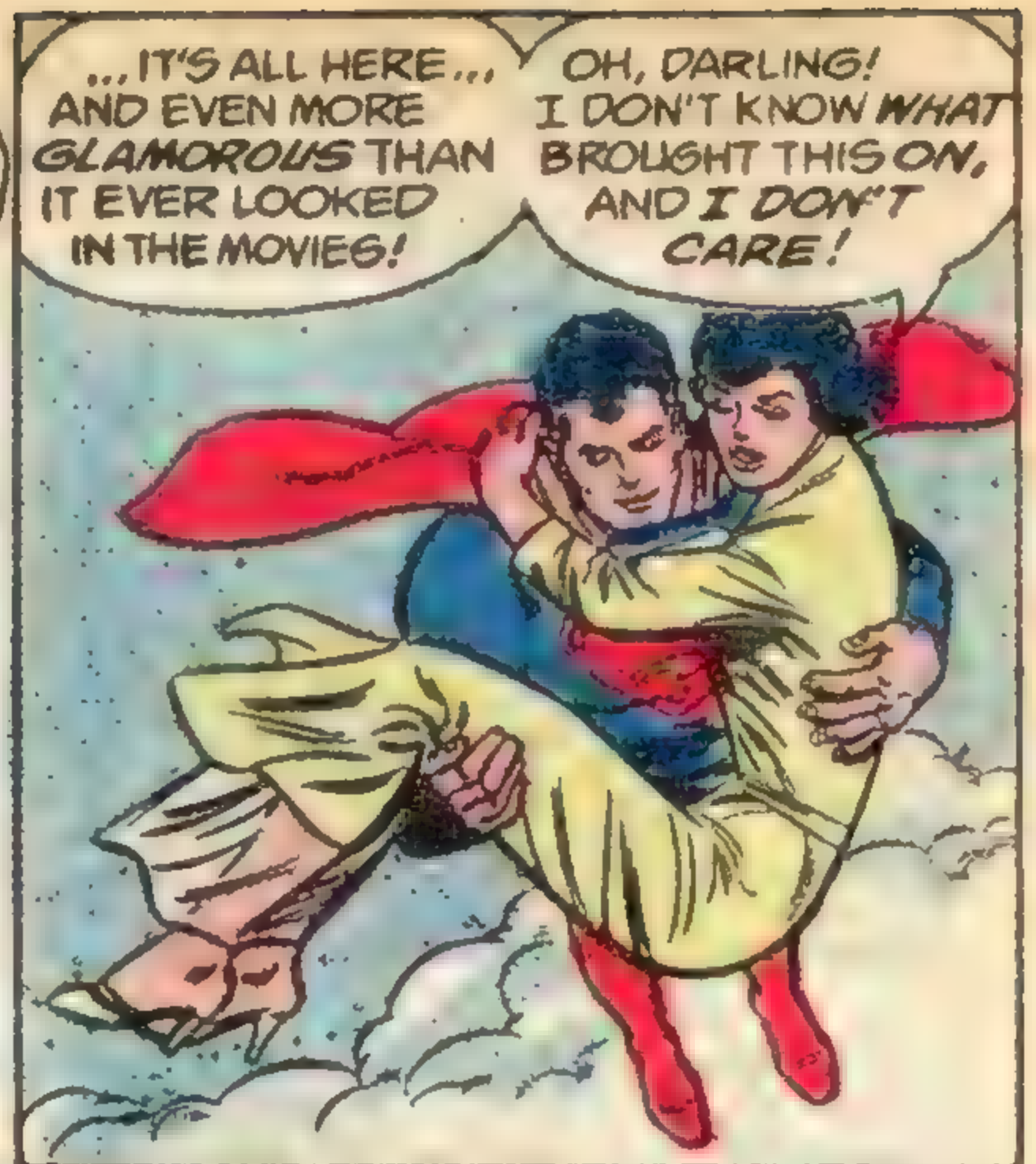
...BEFORE SHE HAS THE SLIGHTEST INKLING SHE HAS BEEN SWEEPED UP IN A SUPER-SPEED WHIRLWIND-- AN INCREDIBLE SPIN THAT SWIFTLY LEAVES ALL TRACE OF 1987 FAR BEHIND...

...OR SHOULD WE SAY, 1987 HAS BEEN LEFT FAR AHEAD?

S-SUPERMAN!? WHAT HAPPENED TO MY APARTMENT? DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE DONE?



OF COURSE, LOIS! IT WAS JUST A SIMPLE CLOCKWISE SPIN THROUGH THE TIME BARRIER WHILE THE EARTH ROTATED BENEATH US...



AT THAT VERY MOMENT, HEADING DUE NORTH OVER THE ARCTIC...

MORGAN EDGE IS GOING TO HAVE MY HEAD FOR LEAVING POOR JOSH HIGH AND DRY THIS MORNING!

YOU THINK YOU'RE IN TROUBLE-- WAIT'LL PERRY WHITE FINDS OUT I'M NOT AT THE COURTHOUSE COVERING THE TRIAL OF A KEY MOB BOSS!

YOU KNOW, LUV, FOR ME THIS STILL DOESN'T SCAN RIGHT! WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE SUPERMAN WAS SO ADAMANT ABOUT BOTH OF US ACCOMPANYING HIM HERE TO HIS FORTRESS?

I'M JUST AS STUMPED AS YOU ARE, LANA! ALL I KNOW IS... HE SAID IT WOULDN'T BE LONG BEFORE WE FOUND OUT THE ANSWER!

AND INSIDE THE WARMTH OF THE MASSIVE CITADEL...

BRRR! ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE GOT THE HEAT TURNED UP?

RIGHT! I'M GETTING CHILLS LIKE I NEVER HAD BEFORE!

MY X-RAY VISION REVEALS THE FINAL SYMPTOMS OF THE PLAGUE HAVE FINALLY BROKEN THROUGH THEIR YOUTHFUL IMMUNITY SYSTEMS!

THAT MEANS... THE END FOR LOIS AND LANA MAY ONLY BE MOMENTS AWAY! I BROUGHT THEM HERE TO THE FORTRESS SO THEY COULD ~~choko~~ DIE... IN PEACE!

NOW... SOMEHOW... I HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO TELL THEM THEY'VE BEEN ROBBED OF THEIR FUTURES --ALL BECAUSE I FAILED TO--

WAIT A MINUTE!

THE FUTURE! OF COURSE, WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT BEFORE!?

ALTHOUGH IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVEN A SUPERMAN TO CHANGE THE PAST--

SNAP

--THERE'S NOTHING TO PREVENT ME FROM GOING ON A LIFE-SAVING TRIP INTO THE FAR FUTURE!

SUPERMAN! ONE SECOND HE WAS HERE-- NOW HE'S NOWHERE IN SIGHT!

HE ZOOMS OFF AND LEAVES US TO FREEZE SOLID!

WHILE ALREADY THOUSANDS OF YEARS AWAY AND STILL ACCELERATING...

I'LL ZOOM PAST SEVERAL MORE CENTURIES JUST TO BE SAFE!

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I WANT TO BE SURE THE FUTURE CIVILIZATION I CHOOSE IS SO SCIENTIFICALLY ADVANCED THERE'LL BE NO CHANCE OF LEAVING EMPTY-HANDED!

AND A FIGURE OF RED AND BLUE ABRUPTLY EMERGES IN THE SKIES OF A STRANGE, YET DISTANTLY FAMILIAR, EARTHLY SPHERE...

HERE I AM... IN THE LATTER 88TH CENTURY, BY MY RECKONING!

BUT IT APPEARS SUDDEN EMERGENCIES ARE STILL VERY MUCH A PART OF THE FAR FUTURE!

ALTHOUGH THIS FLOATING METROPOLIS IS PROBABLY EQUIPPED WITH ITS OWN ADVANCED DEFENSE WEAPONS--

--I THOUGHT I'D SAVE THEM THE TROUBLE! HOPEFULLY, ONE GOOD TURN STILL DESERVES ANOTHER IN THIS ERA!

BUT WHEN THE METROPOLIS MARVEL ENTERS THE BREATHTAKING REALM OF THE FUTURISTIC SPHERES...

YOUR ARRIVAL HAS BEEN EXPECTED, SUPERMAN! YOU ARE DIRECTED TO FOLLOW ME TO THE GRAND COUNCIL CHAMBER!

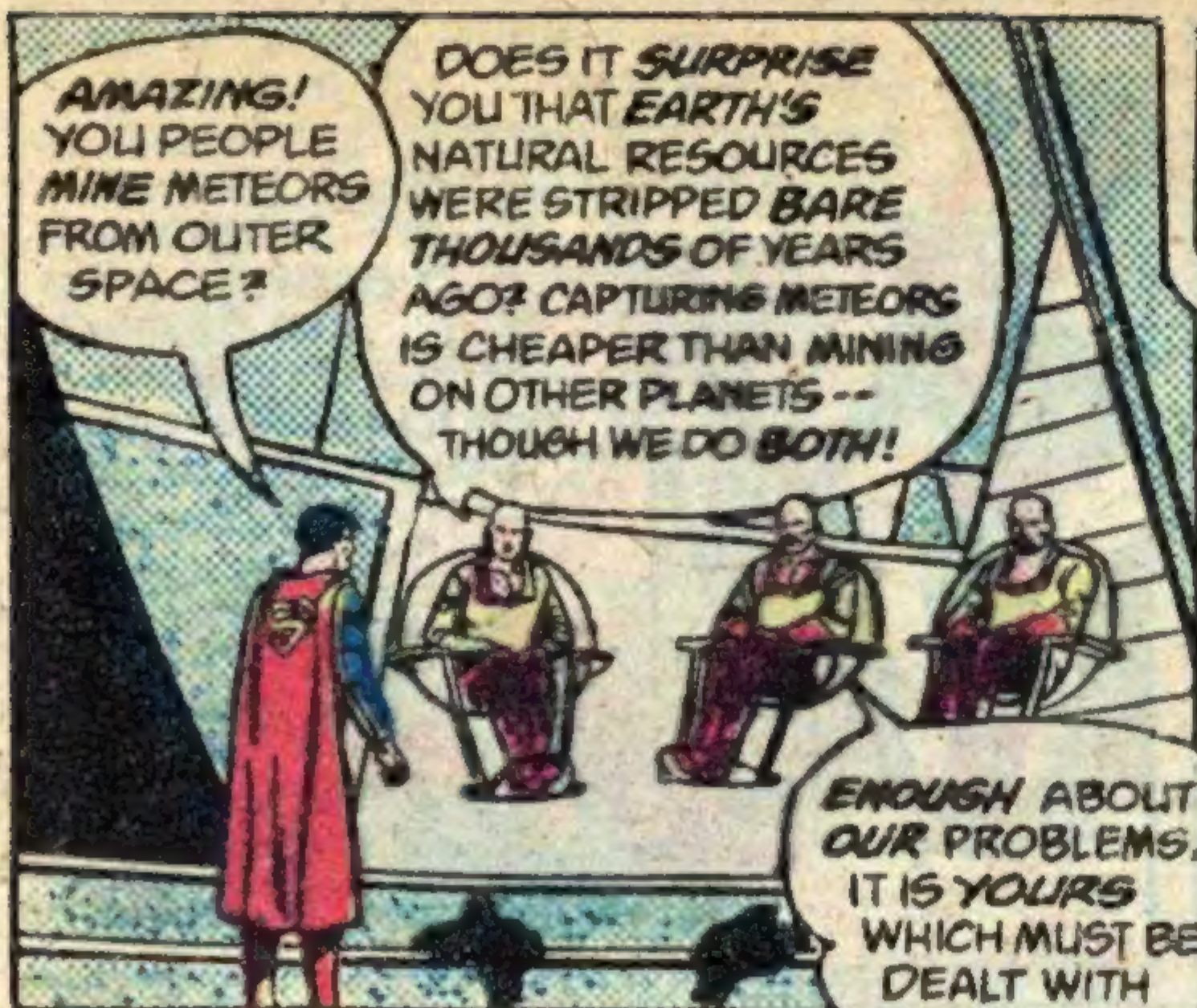
YOUR GRIEVOUS ERROR WILL NOT BE HELD AGAINST YOU!

MY ERROR--P/P

THAT METEOR WAS SPOTTED NEAR EARTH, SO WE FIRED AN INVISIBLE MAGNE-BEAM INTO ITS CORE!

WE WERE DRAWING IT INTO OUR CONTAINMENT BERTH WHEN YOU INTERFERED!

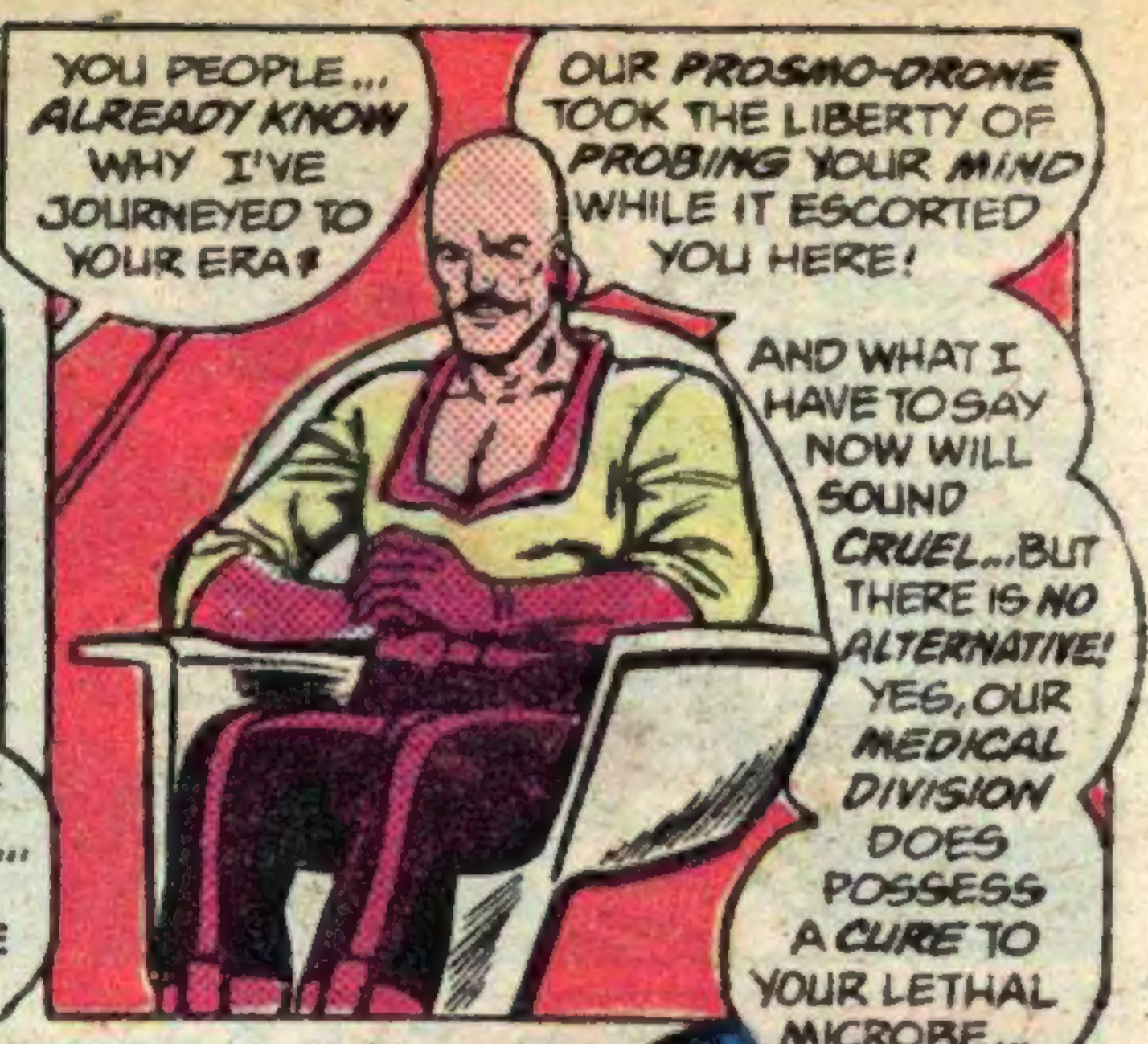
OUR MINING DIVISION WOULD HAVE BENEFITED GREATLY FROM THE METEOR'S RARE ORES!



AMAZING!
YOU PEOPLE
MINE METEORS
FROM OUTER
SPACE?

DOES IT SURPRISE
YOU THAT EARTH'S
NATURAL RESOURCES
WERE STRIPPED BARE
THOUSANDS OF YEARS
AGO? CAPTURING METEORS
IS CHEAPER THAN MINING
ON OTHER PLANETS --
THOUGH WE DO BOTH!

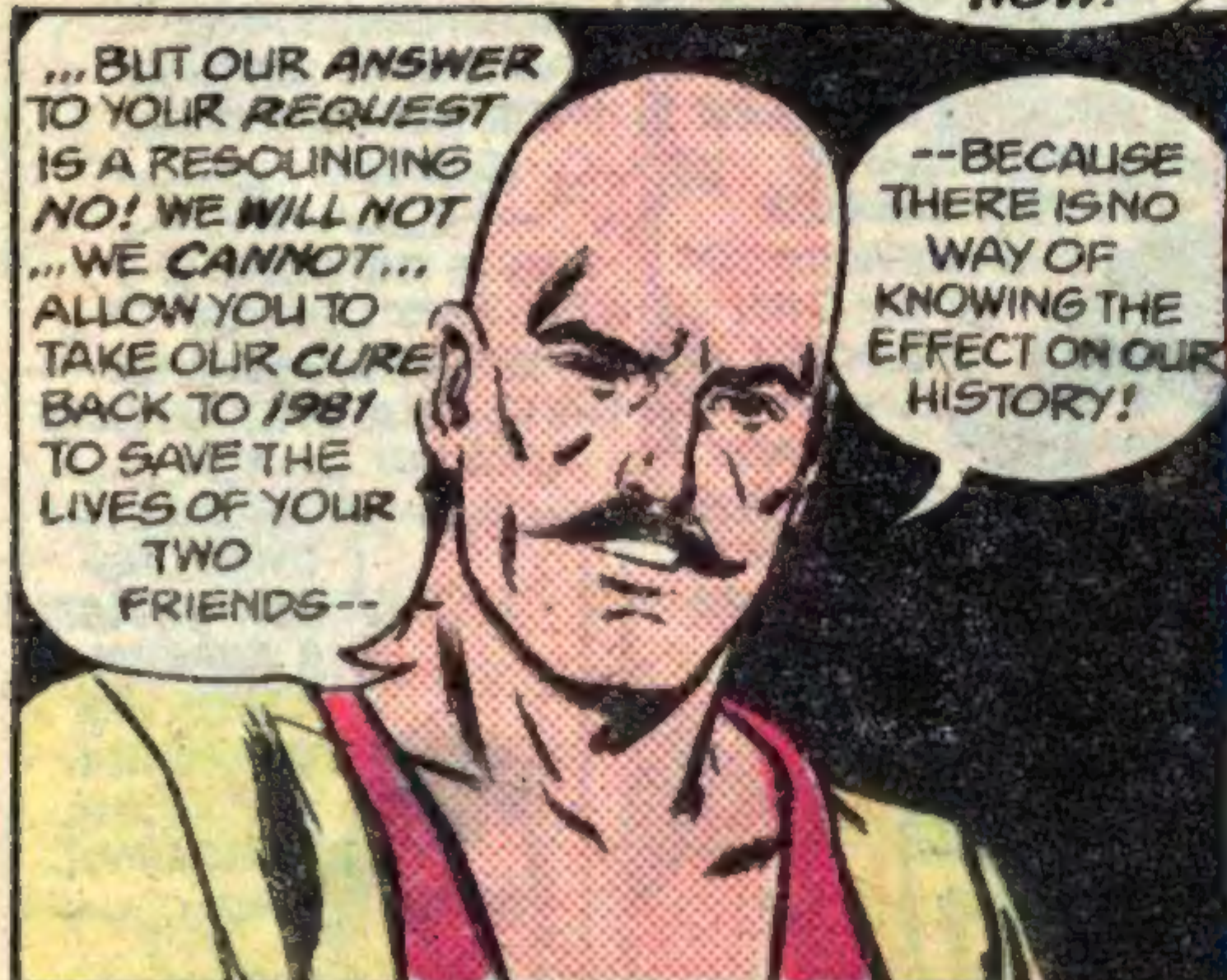
ENOUGH ABOUT
OUR PROBLEMS...
IT IS YOURS
WHICH MUST BE
DEALT WITH
NOW!



YOU PEOPLE...
ALREADY KNOW
WHY I'VE
JOURNEYED TO
YOUR ERA?

OUR PROSMO-DRONE
TOOK THE LIBERTY OF
PROBING YOUR MIND
WHILE IT ESCORTED
YOU HERE!

AND WHAT I
HAVE TO SAY
NOW WILL
SOUND
CRUEL...BUT
THERE IS NO
ALTERNATIVE!
YES, OUR
MEDICAL
DIVISION
DOES
POSSESS
A CURE TO
YOUR LETHAL
MICROBE...



...BUT OUR ANSWER
TO YOUR REQUEST
IS A RESOUNDING
NO! WE WILL NOT
...WE CANNOT...
ALLOW YOU TO
TAKE OUR CURE
BACK TO 1981
TO SAVE THE
LIVES OF YOUR
TWO FRIENDS--

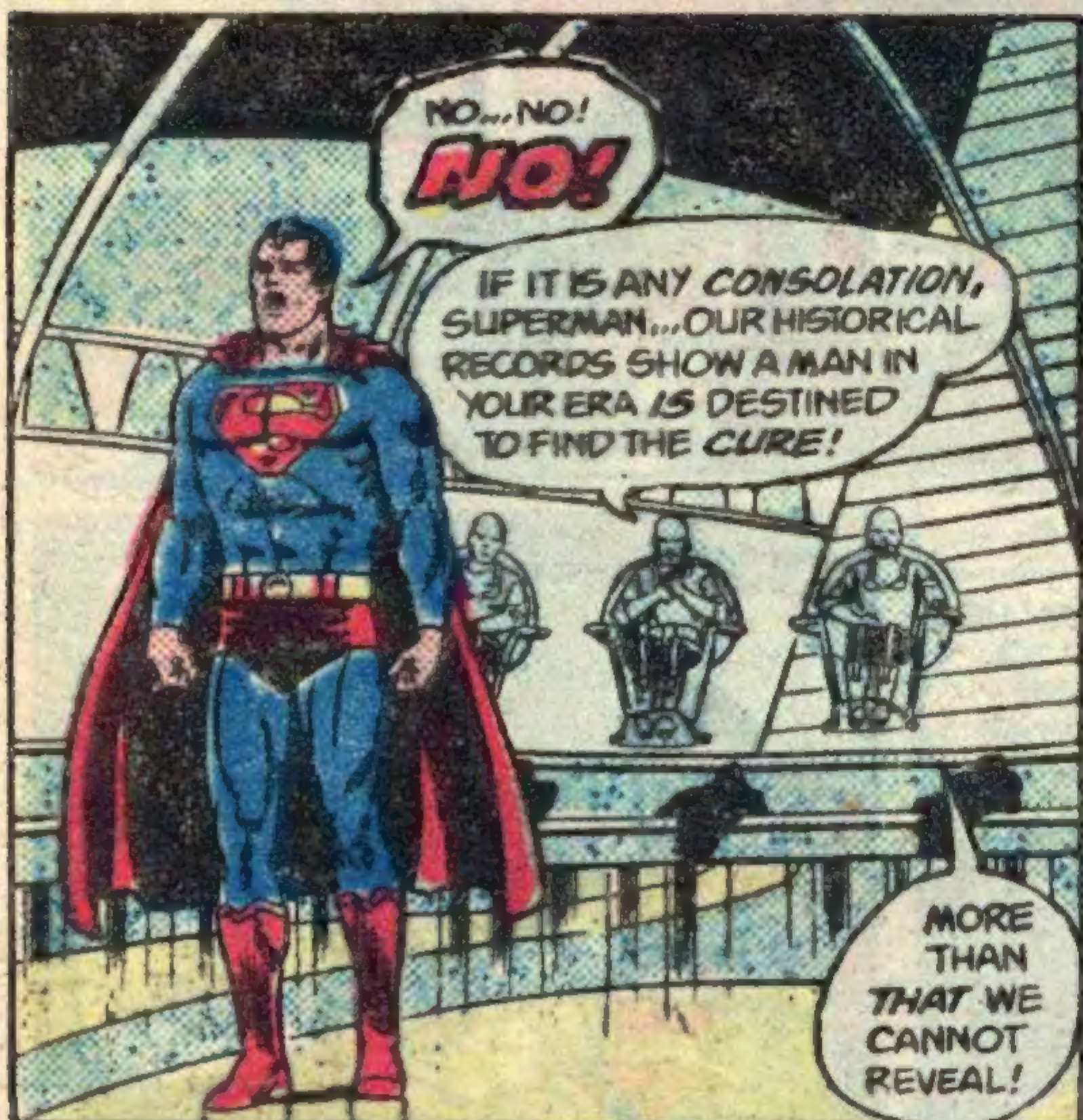
--BECAUSE
THERE IS NO
WAY OF
KNOWING THE
EFFECT ON OUR
HISTORY!



MOREOVER, IT
WOULD CERTAINLY
CAUSE A MAJOR
TIME PARADOX!

THE
CONSEQUENCES
COULD WREAK HAVOC
WITH THE ENTIRE
SPACE-TIME
CONTINUUM!

AS PRECIOUS
AS THESE FEMALES
ARE TO YOU...WOULD
YOU DARE RISK THE
WELL-BEING OF
BILLIONS TO SPARE
TWO LIVES?



NO...NO!
NO!

IF IT IS ANY CONSOLATION,
SUPERMAN...OUR HISTORICAL
RECORDS SHOW A MAN IN
YOUR ERA IS DESTINED
TO FIND THE CURE!

MORE
THAN
THAT WE
CANNOT
REVEAL!

IT IS AN EMBITTERED MAN OF MIGHT
WHO BEGINS THE HEART-WRENCHING
RETURN TRIP TO 1981--AND THE FINAL
DYING MOMENTS OF LOIS LANE AND
LANA LANG...



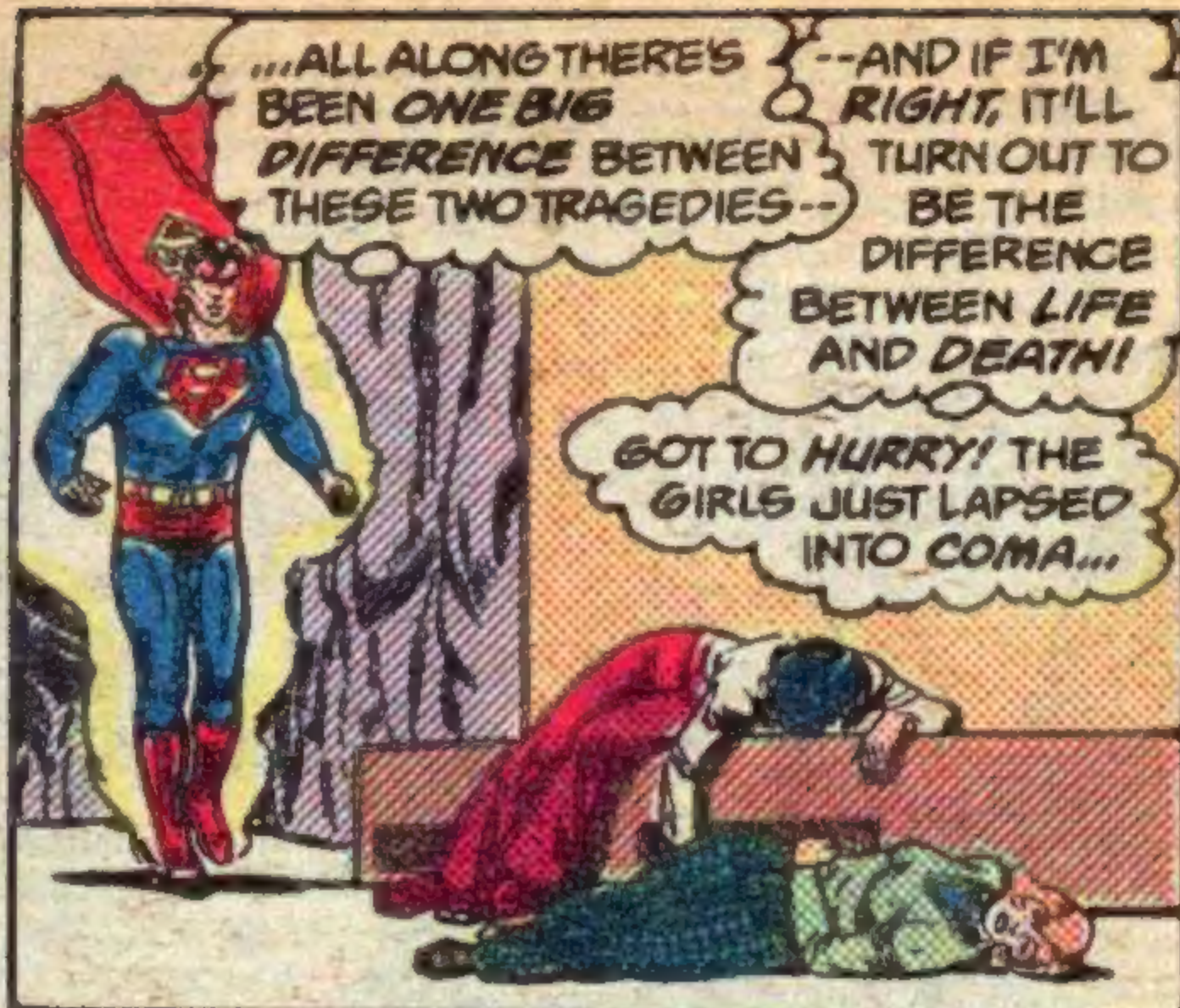
MY LAST
CHANCE TO
SAVE THE GIRLS--
AND IT BECOMES
A DEAD END
BECAUSE
TRANSPORTING A
CURE THROUGH
TIME COULD UPSET
THE COURSE OF
HUMAN HISTORY!



IS THERE NOTHING LEFT FOR ME TO DO BUT WATCH HISTORY TRAGICALLY REPEAT ITSELF AS LOIS AND LANA SUCCLUMB EXACTLY THE SAME WAY MA AND PA KENT--

WAIT A SECOND! HISTORY HASN'T BEEN REPEATING ITSELF... AT LEAST NOT EXACTLY!

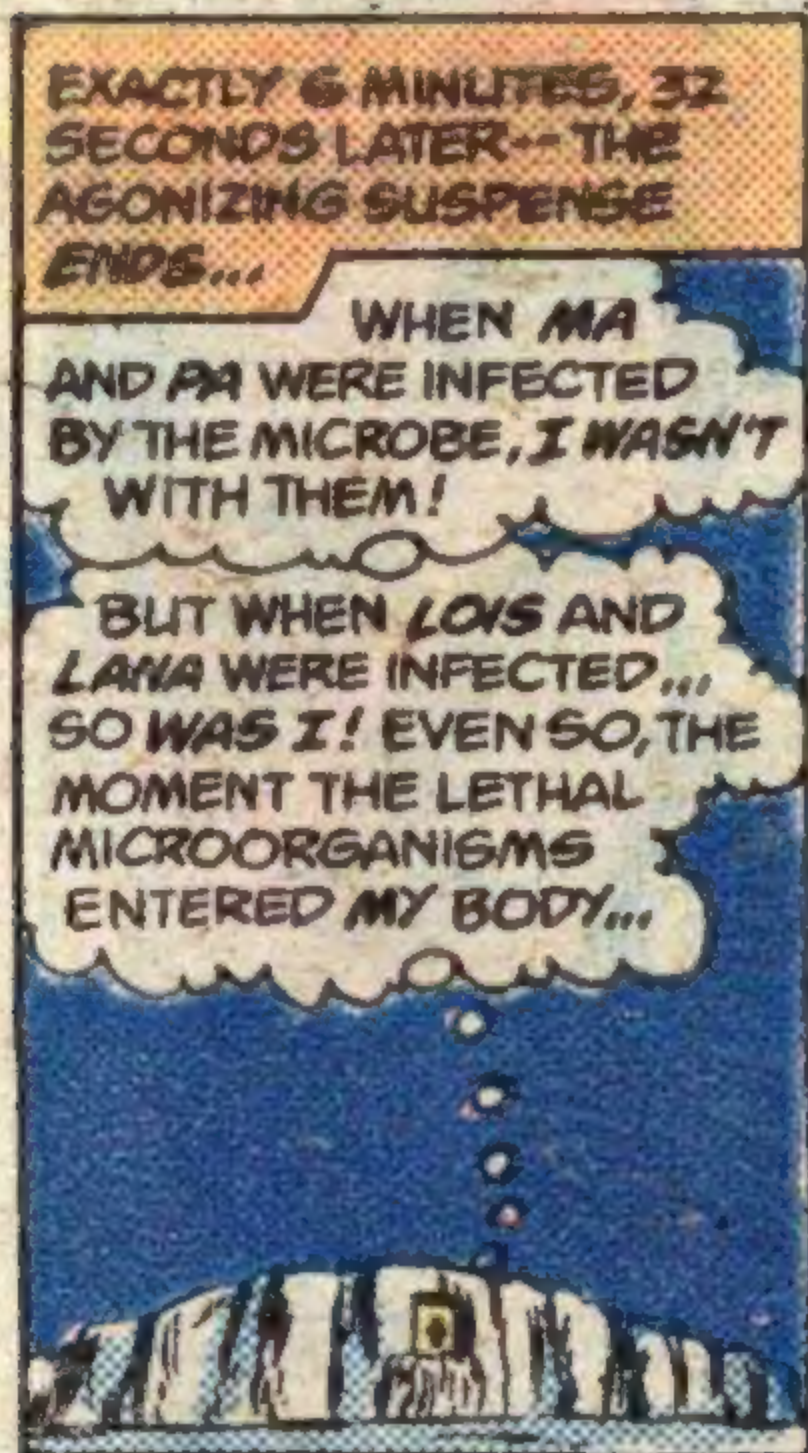
I JUST REALIZED...



...ALL ALONG THERE'S BEEN ONE BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO TRAGEDIES--

--AND IF I'M RIGHT, IT'LL TURN OUT TO BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH!

GOT TO HURRY! THE GIRLS JUST LAPPED INTO COMA...



EXACTLY 6 MINUTES, 32 SECONDS LATER-- THE AGONIZING SUSPENSE ENDS...

WHEN MA AND PA WERE INFECTED BY THE MICROBE, I WASN'T WITH THEM!

BUT WHEN LOIS AND LANA WERE INFECTED... SO WAS I! EVEN SO, THE MOMENT THE LETHAL MICROORGANISMS ENTERED MY BODY...

...THE SUPER-ANTI-BODIES IN MY BLOODSTREAM INSTANTLY RENDERED THE MICROBES HARMLESS!

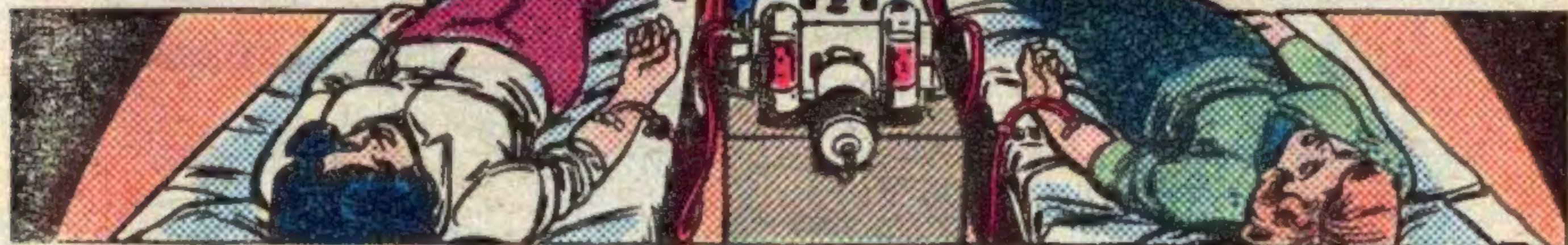
ALL THIS TIME I'VE BEEN CARRYING AROUND THE CURE --AN ORGANIC SUPER-SERUM "MANUFACTURED" BY MY OWN BLOOD!

ALREADY THE DOUBLE-TRANSFUSION IS STARTING TO TAKE EFFECT...

...BOTH GIRLS ARE STARTING TO REGAIN THEIR HEALTHY VITAL SIGNS!

THIS IS THE CURE I COULDN'T USE AS SUPERBOY... BECAUSE THE PLAGUE ONLY AFFECTS ADULTS!

BUT ENOUGH DWELLING ON THE PAST! A SUPERMAN OWES HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PRESENT...



"...AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE FUTURE!"

DO YOU THINK SUPERMAN WILL EVER FORGIVE US FOR NOT TELLING HIM THAT IT WAS HE WHO WAS DESTINED TO DISCOVER THAT MICROBE CURE IN THE 20TH CENTURY...

...A DISCOVERY HE WAS FATED TO MAKE WITHIN MINUTES AFTER LEAVING US?



TO QUOTE A FAMOUS SAYING OF ANOTHER TIME-ERA--

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL!"

CHOOSING THE YEAR'S BEST

In previous years, the DC editors have simply voted on all the stories published by the company in the preceding year. The result was that *Superman* tended to dominate the issues. This year, we decided to avoid that.

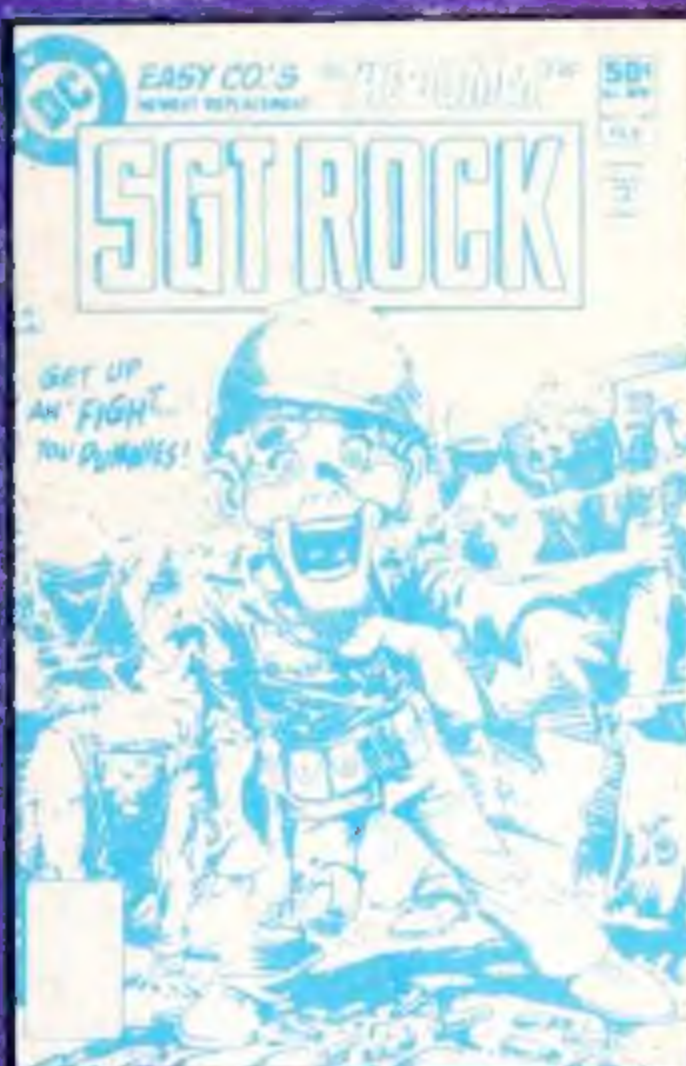
Each editor was invited to nominate the best stories published in his magazines. So many excellent ones from different series were available that this time we asked for, and got, more pages to fill.

One story was tops on everybody's list of the best: "To Kill a Legend," from *DETECTIVE* #500. This very special tale of *The Batman* and *Robin* setting out to prevent a repetition, on a parallel world, the tragedy that caused Bruce Wayne to become the Caped Crime-fighter, was a real must.

The number of continued stories presented us with a problem, as some were clearly among the year's best. Even with a bigger magazine, we couldn't include two or three complete issues (*The Krypton Chronicles*, for example). In the end, it was decided to use the final chapters of two such stories: "Triumph," from *Tales of the Green Lantern Corps* #3, and "The Dying Day of Lois and Lana," from *SUPERMAN* #363. Each had enough recapping to tell the reader what had gone before.

THE NEW TEEN TITANS #8, *SGT. ROCK* #349, and *JONAH HEX* #53 provided other choices. Then, from among the many shorter stories published during the year, we picked one from *HOUSE OF MYSTERY* #288, a *Tale of Gotham City* from *DETECTIVE* #507, a *Shazam* from *WORLD'S FINEST* #41, and "Whatever Happened to the Crimson Avenger" from *DC COMICS PRESENTS* #38.

And here's the result: the top ten of 1981!



The Best Stories of 1981

"TO KILL A LEGEND" (BATMAN)

"SIVANA'S NOBEL" (SHAZAM!)

"THE DUMMY" (SGT. ROCK)

"A DAY IN THE LIVES..."
(THE NEW TEEN TITANS)

"THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF HELL"
(HOUSE OF MYSTERY)

"THE HAUNTING" (JONAH HEX)

"TRIUMPH!"
(TALES OF THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS)

"WHATEVER HAPPENED TO --
THE CRIMSON AVENGER?"

"THE PURSUIT OF JOY" (TALES OF
GOTHAM CITY)

"THE DYING DAY OF LOIS AND LANA"
(SUPERMAN)

